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OCTAVIA HILL

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OCTAVIA HILL

EARLY IDEALS

FROM LETTERS EDITED

By

EMILY S. MAURICE

LONDON
GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD
MUSEUM STREET

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TO

MY DEAR SISTER FLORENCE

WHOSE ADVICE AND SYMPATHY HAVE BEEN

OF THE GREATEST HELP

OCTAVIA HILL

August 13, 1912

Her name is graved on England's golden roll,
For she was golden-hearted, ever strove
To help with clear-eyed wisdom, strenuous love,
The poor to feel that better far than dole
Was self-respect, self-help, and self-control.
Before her faith all mountains seemed to move,
All gulfs were filled, all paths made straight to prove
God still was of this world the Over-soul.

Ah! never more in London's friendlier street,
In London's homelier alley shall we see
Her flashing eye, her sympathetic face;
But tho' the noblest heart has ceased to beat,
Her spirit, more effectual and free,
Calls us to fill the unwearied worker's place.

H. D. Rawnsley

PREFACE

SINCE the issue of the *Life and Letters of Octavia Hill*,[1] which gives such a full and vivid account of my sister's life and work, a number of her letters have come into my possession which throw much light on her early struggles and aspirations, and I have been urged by many friends to publish them.

The greater number of these letters are to Mary Harris, who was much older than Octavia, and a member of the Society of Friends. They first met when Octavia was only sixteen years of age, and they corresponded for about twenty years, Octavia chronicling, not merely the events in her life, but many of her deepest thoughts and serious questionings to this friend, whose spiritual nature and complete sympathy were of untold help to my sister.

I should have scrupled to publish these letters, which contain so much that is intimate and sacred, had it not been for the hope that the many beautiful thoughts contained therein would be a help and inspiration to others.

This book shows also the friendship which existed between my sister and John Ruskin, and by the kind permission of his Executor I am privileged to make use of some hitherto unpublished letters from Ruskin to Octavia.

[1] *Life and Letters of Octavia Hill*, by C. Edmund Maurice. Macmillan & Co.

My sister's part in the initiation of the Movements for securing better homes for the poor and open spaces for the public is generally known, but few realize how she began her work, or the generous aid and sympathy of Ruskin.

These early letters throw considerable light on the difficulties she encountered in the tenements, and how from the first she realized the principles on which she must act. She saw that intercourse and sympathy with her tenants, learning from them and working with them, would be the means by which their lives and homes could be reformed.

It is encouraging to note the wonderful progress in the Open Spaces and Housing Movements, in which many of Octavia's friends are co-operating in the National Trust, the Commons Preservation Society, and the Women's House Property Management. This last Society, formed by Octavia's fellow-workers after her death in 1912, has grown to considerable importance, continuing to carry on house management according to her principles. Women are trained as surveyors and in the practical management of houses, and there is an increasing demand for their help and services in connection with property belonging to the Crown, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, Municipalities, Companies, and individual owners of houses.

Homes of the London Poor, by Octavia Hill, brought out in America in 1875, was afterwards translated into German by the Princess Alice of Hesse Darmstadt.

General interest was awakened, and Octavia received frequent communications from social reformers in various countries—Austria, France, Germany, Holland, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland; and housing improvements were set on foot in many cases—notably in Holland.

In Amsterdam a town-planning scheme covering many acres was initiated on the outskirts of the city. In January 1928 no less than 28,648 dwellings had been built. The 'Octavia Hill System' has been adopted over the whole planned extension of the city. It is carried on by fifteen inspectors, of whom fourteen are women, with six assistants. Special attention is given to the cases of families who have been removed from condemned houses and cellar dwellings.

My warm thanks are due to Mrs. Dryhurst for proof-reading, and to Miss Llewelyn Davies for her advice.

EMILY SOUTHWOOD MAURICE

HAMPSTEAD

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PART I

EARLY EXPERIENCES

INTRODUCTION

MANY of the following letters were written by Octavia between the age of seventeen and twenty-one, and they show remarkably that even at that early age she was pondering over deep and serious subjects, and keenly interested in a variety of questions, while dominated by a sense of duty and a strong love of home and family life, marked by a tender solicitude for us all.

In 1856 our mother was much occupied with writing and teaching, and we had to carry on our various occupations in rather an independent way. This developed in Octavia a strong sense of almost anxious responsibility, as she was hardly conscious how our mother was watching over us, guiding and inspiring us with her noble ideals. Miranda, her eldest daughter, was engaged in teaching, Gertrude had been adopted by her grandfather, Dr. Southwood Smith, and was living at Weybridge; Florence, the youngest, was with her aunt in Italy, and I was at home studying and associated with my sister Octavia's work and interests. Her strength of character led all her family to rely much upon her. She was leading a very busy life at that time: drawing for Ruskin, acting as secretary for the Working Women's Classes, established by Rev. F. D. Maurice in the rooms of the Working Men's College, and also continuing to manage the Toy-Making business for the employment of poor children, formerly carried on at the Ladies' Guild, a Co-operative Society for employing ladies in painting on consolidated glass financed by Edward Vansittart Neale, Mrs. Southwood Hill being the manager.

To Mary Harris

Francis St., London
May 6, 1856

Mary, you will be happy.

My work must always be here, and I, too, must be happy, because joy throws round it a light and warmth which it is good for man to live in; we have no right to cast shadows over the paths of those we live with. . . . I had a longing for rest, quiet, beauty. At last I thought whether all which had been noble, in men of all ages, was not a resistance to inclination, a sense of a mission, whether all I had done best was not in forgetting self. . . . I feel as if I would be so cheerful here that you could not resist its gladness, that you should feel the young bright life in every part of the house, as if I were serving you, sympathizing with you, working for you; and, if trouble seemed brooding over you, you would hear me singing: 'But thou didst not leave his soul in Hell.' And, as you sat silent quietly, you should hear the prayer: 'Holiest, breathe an evening blessing,' and know that there was one who was with you. Be happy. You must be happy.

You ask about my going back to you; but I must not again leave my work at the College to Minnie.

To M. H.[1]

November 7, 1856

Why do I never hear anything of your work among the prisoners in Newgate?

[1] The letters "M. H." stand for Mary Harris.

However little you may seem to do, you will not give it up, will you? If you could imagine what the presence of a noble soul can be to those degraded beings shut out from all that is best and honourable, and with the weight of inward evil, to know that there is one to care for and love them, because they have that in them which is God given. Never let this consciousness remain unawakened. If, indeed, later on there comes to this being, as there does to most, a knowledge that there is yet a barrier, none in this life can destroy, between herself and the angel she has seen, she will probably sink again to nearly the same level as before, but with a little more hope, and a great deal more love and reverence. I do not mean that I believe these women capable yet of this degree either of penetration, admiration, or love, were they so their redemption would be half accomplished, but I do know that deep in those sunken hearts of theirs, hardened by crime and degraded, there yet is human feeling to be called out by nothing so much as by intercourse with human spirits—to deserve and win their trust and love is the first thing, since you cannot make yourself dependent on their kindness. So shall the vague shadow of good things that lurk in the still chambers of their hearts come forth and live—the sparks of human divine warmth shall glow and grow and flame—the stone that encased their hearts shall melt as ice before the sun, and the first germ of noble loving spirit be developed in them.

This work had to be given up when Miss Harris went to live in Cumberland to take care of her five little nieces who had lost their mother.—E. S. M.

To M. H.

May 25, 1856

I fear you did not understand what I meant about going to Meeting on Sunday; that you thought I did not like to go. Please do not think so. It is not so at all. Do you remember that dear church at West Ham? The church service, which gains for me a new meaning, a fresh glory, as I hear it under fresh circumstances, or with other people I love, has become infinitely more precious to me since that day. I do not know, I should like very much to know what you think about fixed services, forms of prayer, &c.; but I feel, Mary, you will prize them when I tell you how much I have learnt from them, how much joy and comfort they have given me.

To A Stranger

(Inquiring about Christian Socialists.)

1856

The history of this body of men would be well worth studying. The Society was composed of people of all religions, and differing in politics—Chartists, Conservatives, Whigs, Radicals. They called themselves *Christian* Socialists because, they said, that the meeting point for all sorts of Socialists was the belief that fellow-work was stronger than isolation, union than division, and generosity than selfishness.

To M. H.

August 3, 1856

Will you come with me to the Bean-feast? I want you to understand about it before deciding. It is an annual holiday for the two Associations of Tailors, of which my

great friend, Walter Cooper, is the manager. The tailors, their wives and children and friends form the body of the party, and invite Mr. Maurice, Mr. Neale, Mr. Furnivall, Mr. Ludlow, Mr. Hughes, &c. They come, most of them in vans to the Roebuck Inn at Woodford, where they spend the whole day, cricketing, swinging, riding, shooting with bows and arrows, &c. After dinner, Mr. Maurice and Mr. Cooper and others speak. You know my opinion about classes in society sufficiently to know why I go and why I should rejoice that you should go. And also, though we should probably not see much of the Promoters of the Co-operative Associations, for they devote themselves to those for whom the holiday is planned, I should like you to see them, and we should, I doubt not, see a great deal of Mr. Maurice. He told me to-day he should hope to see me there. I don't know if it is possible for you to go.

To M. H.

June 19, 1856

Will you ask M. to let me know exactly what she thinks this illumination ought to cost? Neither can I nor will I fix the price. I cannot, because price is a question that I do not understand. I do not know what ought to regulate it. Whether the trouble of the producer, the means of the consumer or purchaser; why one sort of work (usually the most agreeable) is paid a higher rate than another that I do not like. Of all the ways of working, I think Ruskin's alone right. He does not speak or think of paying you for your work; he says: 'You have power, use it. Don't trouble yourself any more about how you are to live. I have been given means; take some of them;

live, set your mind at rest, and heart free; don't bind yourself to hours, be a free worker; express that which you think of.'

To M. H.

June 1856

I went to a meeting about Ragged Schools. Oh, to hear how people talk of others, and think they are treating them as Christians! I'd rather be a table than a Ragged School child. Not an attempt made to show how the teaching influences the children themselves, plenty of statistics about numbers of Bibles given away, &c. I should like to know, Mary, what you think about classes in society, rank, station, work; how far you approve of intercourse between classes, how far you would do work which is usually done by a lower class, if it were useful, but not necessary. Oh, what a power for good anyone has, who does go among people, as if he was one of them, entering into all their thoughts.

I walked twice to Mile End to hear Maurice and Kingsley preach. I never leave London when Mr. Maurice is here.

To M. H.

Working Women's Classes, 31 Red Lion Square

August 9, 1856

I am sitting quite alone while the Drawing Class goes on; two sycamore-trees are rustling their leaves as if in sympathy with the grey clouds which are drifting hurriedly along; the smoke pours down, the leaves lie scattered on the ground, only one green tuft speaks of life. The air is thick and hot, and the occasional roll of

distant carriages disturbs the silence. Damp, heavy, and dull are sky and earth. Oh, where are all the glad thoughts that sometimes surround me? Where is all the power of sympathy? We are going back to live at Russell Place at the same old house where the Ladies' Guild was carried on.

Mary, what blessed things circumstances are! How happy it is for us to be obliged to do things, else some of us would certainly shut ourselves up from all around us, wrapt in selfishness, or lost in vivid pictures of absent faces, or vague dreams of happiness. Did I not once say to you that I believed wishes were sometimes granted that we might feel how utterly worthless the thing wished for was in itself? I have often seen, too, how prayers are not answered until we are contented that they shouldn't be, and then they seem to come as a free gift to us, and we are really grateful—come, indeed, like all love, and all marks of love.

In the *Life and Letters*, a full account is given of the Toy Making at the Ladies' Guild, of which Octavia had had the management, and which was carried on elsewhere, for a time, after the Guild was broken up.—E. S. M.

To M. H.

July 6, 1856

The little Toy Workers, in whom I daily see more improvement, are becoming ever more dear to me. And if I may not look forward to a pause, in which to gather fresh strength, a rest to give me power to work better, a time to see more of all the glorious beauties of fern and grass and flower, sunsets and sunlight, which

are shedding their glory around them, in this bright summer weather, still after this strange wearying life is over there will surely be rest, beauty, and communion with friends; yes, they are for us now, even now, if we will take them, even for those who work hardest, who live in the dreariest ugliness, who see least of those they love; there is rest for all; outward rest though not enough; rest, perfect peace in the assurance that we are not labouring for ourselves in a world governed by stern laws and necessities, but for some of God's children, for whom He wills plenty, joy, knowledge; in the assurance that He will care for them, if it pleases Him to call us home to Him; that His blessing and help is for our work, if He permits us to continue it. Therefore, rest in its noblest form is for us so great a reality as to be above circumstances, something of which we can tell those whose lives seem nothing but work. Beauty is for all, outward beauty in the single glimpses of green, in sunlight, however dimmed, in clouds, however darkened, in faces, however worn; inward beauty, unspeakable in gentleness, sacrifice, energy, generosity, humility, strength, reverence, and all nobleness in great deeds, public and private. Lights, shadows, and colours. Joys, sorrows, and characters are in the visible and invisible world beauties that can raise the soul in reverence. Communion with friends. Yes

> 'Though vain the vision seem
> To those who know not how my every thought
> Is with thine image fraught.'

As the mighty power of sympathy is strengthened and intensified by the education which life gives us, this other

nobler communion shall be more possible. There is yet another power which gives us all things—*memory*.

My poor children have been so longing for a little summer in the country. Oh, how I wish that I could give it them.

To E. S. Hill

September 12, 1856

My dearest Minnie,

I must suppose you have heard all the news, because if not I should not know where to begin or end. St. Michael is finished, and I believe it to be very beautiful. I am now beginning the most beautiful thing by Trench. I am reading Ruskin, and had before no idea how intensely delightful it is to read him. I do not know what to read first—Ruskin's books, Mr. Maurice's, or poems for illuminations. You will, I suppose, find us at Russell Place when you return. Will it not be strange? I am sorry my holidays are so near. I am so fond of my pupils, and shall not like giving up my classes.

I am so glad that you have seen the sea. I long to hear from you about how it looked. It is many years since I saw it. I remember well, however, all that I did see, though doubtless now there would be worlds more of beauty and power of speech in it than there were for me then. I remember with particular joy a walk along the top of the high cliffs, at the edge of a cornfield, brilliant with poppies studded like stars among the ears of tall grain—the cliffs white, wherever from a bay or projection we saw the perpendicular breast, so strong, so firm, and yet so tender, supporting the tiniest pimpernel on their crowns; but there far below stretched the sea, the wide,

the free, the restful, the gloriously blue crests of white foam riding on the waves, and above all the blue of the sky, with masses of torn clouds hurried from over the land to sink, as if at rest, where the far line of the rushing sea was hushed into folds of gold, by distance and by sun.[1] And, oh, the wind, the buoyant, the spirited wind playing with rising water and white foam, with gathering cloud and waving corn; even the seagulls, that seemed steady in their determination, yielding to the spirit of the scene, sailed hither and thither, borne by the wild, free wind.

Ever your affte. sister,
OCTAVIA

When Octavia was about 14 years of age, Miss Rogers, the daughter of G. Rogers, the wood-carver, took her to visit many of the most interesting London churches, and after visiting the Temple she wrote the following:

It was indeed beautiful, but I did not much admire the outside, except the windows with their one large and two small lights. Will not this be the difference between the architecture that is to come and that which is past? The one was in honour of the Trinity, and the builders had a superstitious reverence for the number three, and for the sign of the cross, &c. We live in an age when we feel a clinging to the old forms, and long to preserve them, but why should we continue mere imitations? Instead of building a window with three lights, teach what those lights are. The light of glory of which the

[1] It was about eight years since Octavia had seen the sea, when she was nine years old.

light is its own source; the other, that light which, dwelling among men, throws a divine blessed halo around them. And, thirdly, that light which proceeds from the others, lightening the ignorant and strengthening the weak. I cannot express this in architecture. Oh, that I could!

To M. H.

Miss Rogers was going away; the friend who had cheered and brightened me for many years, and who will never cease to give light wherever she may be. I went for the last time to bring her some flowers. It poured with rain, the dull mass of grey, usually dear to me, stifled me, so black and heavy seemed the future without her. As I reached the top of Traitor's Hill[1] a terrific thunderstorm came on. I stood, swept by hail and rain, which, through the troubled air, dashed the little waves on the pond, the wind sighing also with it in the fir-trees and up the hollows. Over the hills I crept with it; the thunder rolled, and I rejoiced. Was not nature troubled? so was I. Was she not murmuring? and so was I. Was there not also a power of rebellion here? And so there was in me. The storm passed, the sunlight streamed down, every blade of grass, every flower glistened with drops of dew, the whole world was lightened by thousands of buttercups. Oh, might such light her. They resembled her. I loved them deeply for it. Every object had a golden tinge over it, as they have in spring. I was sure that it could not come from the flower, but from the Spirit Who made it. Then, too, perhaps, the joy that she

[1] Parliament Hill.

gave me might be in others, too; it was not all gathered up in her. I prayed that it might shine in desolate places.

To M. H.

December 20, 1856

Miss Rogers read us a lovely Eastern story about a man who worked for wife and children, and trusted in God and his right hand. One day he saw a blind owl fed by a raven, and thought that he, too, would be taken care of, so he ceased to work and grew poor. At last a wise man comes in and asks him why he did not liken himself to a raven instead of to the owl, and helps him to recommence life. It was a lovely story, and one should remember that one is a raven or an owl alternately, as it seems best to God.

To M. H .

December 20, 1856

Yesterday our poor servant Olivia returned to us. She had been away in consequence of the death of a little sister, a child of ten weeks old. When she came in, poor girl, looking so worn and eager, such bright eyes and sunken cheeks told me of bitter want. I asked how her mother was, and she burst out speaking at once, as if she hardly knew whether to speak in a whisper or very loud, and also as if she was doubtful whether to answer shortly, or to run on unburdening her whole heart. She said: 'Oh, she's better now, but she's been very ill, for it give her a shock, though it was only a baby.' Later in the day she said: 'Aint it strange, this is the third baby Mother has lost at ten weeks old,' and after a

pause: 'The Lord knows best. He knows we've bin crying for bread, and He took her away before she should have to cry, too.' Observe, not a touch of selfishness there; no fear lest the child should take any of their bread, but the dread lest she should learn to know the need of it. And then she said, 'But somehow people don't like losing their children usually.' What a wonderful dim vision has arisen before that girl of some other kind of good than comfort, how evidently it has seemed very strange to her that that mother's love, which she has found so completely unselfish, so tender to the little ones, so well acquainted with the heavy sorrows of life, should yet mourn that one of the weakest of her little ones should go to a deeper, stronger love than hers, never to know suffering, hunger, and cold, want or anxiety, giving up life before she has lived to know that bitterest sorrow of all, seeing those you love suffer. Will there not creep gradually over Olivia's soul a certainty that though the little girl, whom she has nursed and loved, has gone to rest and love, though she may rejoice that it is so, she must not mourn for those left in the world, for there is here a kind of perfect good, utterly independent of outward circumstances, which it must be her great purpose to get for all whom she knows, nay that they may learn on earth to understand more even of that love and rest of God's which they shall one day be called to share? The great changes of death, the great changes of life, too, wake us continually from our apathy to presences and powers we usually disregard.

To M. H.

THE PINES, WEYBRIDGE
May 30, 1857

One evening I was riding on St. George's Hill with my sister Gertrude. It had been raining, but the sun had burst out from behind a cloud, and shone on all things; the long sprays of green larch, the dark fir, the patches of amber-coloured moss all sparkled with drops and glowed with colour; but yet the ground was damp and seemed cold, and the dull muffled sound of our horses' hoofs seemed desolate. We spoke of hymns, of Keble, and then I found myself repeating the one we liked so much. I didn't know how much it meant for me, how much I should feel it or perhaps I should hardly have repeated it. Just at the end we reached the top of the hill and stopped. For miles and miles lay a far flat country wrapped in blue evening mist, dark first in the foreground but, on the other side, the low sun was sending a flood of evening light over all things, subdued yet glorious, wrapping all things in a glow, and the drops from the trees over our heads fell like tears.

To M. H.

May 30, 1857

We had a Conversazione at the Working Men's College, to which the pupils and their friends were invited. If you could feel what I did standing here, as it were between the past, present, and future! I heard the voices of angels blessing that which had been, and was, and should be here, speaking of a meeting-point for the divided classes, of friendship and mutual help, of earnest

study and hard work brightened by all three, speaking of the blessing of such momentary casting away of care, for those who can seldom do it. If you could have felt, as I did when the full sound of many voices rose together in song, and seen above all the glory of two crowning faces. There stood Mr. Maurice, his grave face lighted by a smile of delight and sweetness in the realization of much that he had worked for. And here and there and everywhere glanced the fire of Mr. Furnivall's [1] intensely joyous eyes, delighting in all things, seeing everyone, utterly unconscious of himself, doing all that was needed, his soul dwelling continually in sympathy as deep as it is strong.

To M. H.

June 23, 1857

Dear generous Miranda wanted Mamma and me to go to the sea, and, in order to manage this, she wished to give up her visit to the Durrants this year. But I soon showed her how much happier I am here, and now she will go with a free heart, as Mamma is going to Weybridge. Is it not a beautiful thing to see people going forth in the strength of joyous hearts and bright hopes, and does not one sympathize with them more fully if one sees them through the mist of falling tears?

Do you know Tennyson's poem, 'Tears, Idle Tears'? What are these days that are no more? Is not all past joy, sorrow, hope, reverence, love, all that makes life

[1] Dr. F. J. Furnivall, editor of *Chaucer*, and President of the Browning Society.

precious, ours still? Is not the joy in a flower that has long faded ours now? The heart that I have trusted in, the spirit that has walked with me, are gone, they can tell me no new thing, and lead me no longer, nor can I find rest in their purity and peace, but, as I grow and learn, I may keep my memory of them, as they were then, to bear upon all I have learnt, I may strive to fancy all they would say, but the action of their will on mine, the growth of knowledge, is lost, perhaps, for ever. But if I may mourn for aught else besides sin on God's earth it would be for these vain regrets. I need not mourn over 'the days that are no more.' I do not believe in them; the joy, the love are ours for ever. Let us be thankful for memory. Idle days perish without record, but those in which we have felt anything deeply, entered into the heart of anything sympathetically, beheld with open, thankful hearts beauty and glory, looked deeply into a face that now is far away—are impressed on our souls with God's seal.

Let the days go if they must, and never regret them. They have done their work, especially if they have led us to that which is the ground of existence. Is not life all changing? Is not life God's? Are we not His and in His hands? And the brightness and glories of morning and evening shall change, while the world endures, the rose-coloured clouds shall never form the same ranks, as they did last night, yet shall there be a unity and a purpose that shall bind day unto day and day unto night, and all shall be perfectly good. This is just a little bit of what the poem has suggested, but is it not beautiful?

To M. H.

July 3, 1857

I feel sometimes frightened at what I have undertaken.[1] I have learnt since the autumn of 1855 many things, and among others that we undertake more than we know when we say 'Leave us alone, we ask no more help from you; we will stand alone, as far as outward help is concerned, the home, the members of it, are ours henceforward.' Before anyone takes that upon himself let him remember—first it is a *home*, not a collection of rooms he has to regulate, it is a number of human beings he has to support, not machines, nor cattle. You calculate how much you can live on for a week and multiply that by 52, and think you can live so for a year. Oh, how mistaken you are! they are spirits and souls besides bodies that you have to deal with, you have taken on yourself the wants, longings, desires of people, you are bound not only to let them live, but to let them live happily; you must throw open to them stores of amusement, especially if they work hard, you must give them the power of learning, they must see friends, make presents, have holidays, and they will have the right to look to you for the power to do all these things; and if you do your duty, you will give it them, without their seeing that it is any trouble, in the smile or the puzzled thought as you promise to do it; they must not weigh the difficulty of granting their requests, even if you cannot help their knowing there is one. Therefore let no one undertake such a work who does not feel, besides strength, a great deal of self-control. But God will give

[1] Octavia had undertaken financial responsibilities for a member of her family.

both if He gives us this duty. I could sorrow often that it is done so incompletely; I never can sorrow for its hardness or sadness. He is leading me, too, into a sense of full gratitude and thankfulness, not only for the power to help them, but for the help they give me. Have I often fancied that I alone was the giver? I believe I have often. Oh, how false, how blind, how ungrateful. I remember Mamma as she nursed me when I was ill. I remember all the little things she does daily, weeks of momentary self-sacrifice that make up a life of devotion, that I with all my boasted strength and generosity never live for a day. I remember Minnie's intense gentleness, Miranda's determined self-sacrifice, and feel with bowed spirit that they have done infinitely more for me than I have ever done for them, because these gifts are of a nobler kind. Oh, it is easy to work early and late, to keep accounts, and manage house-keeping, etc., but the gentle voice, the loving word, the ministry, the true, tender spirit, these are great gifts, and will endure when the others have perished. The first are the works of strength, the others of goodness. If I had used that strength always nobly, if I had recognized the goodness as divine, if I had been ready to be made in Christ's likeness, then I should have no cause to bow my head, as I do now.

I remember how you used to keep me up by believing that I was better than I seemed, and by loving me.

To E. S. Hill

July 15, 1857

Dearest Minnie,

This letter will reach you on your birthday. I wish it could tell you how fond I am of you, and how

happy it makes me to think of you among such bright, beautiful scenes. I half wish you could be always among such, and yet why should I? True, we cannot weigh the amount of good such scenes do us—true, we cannot calculate their influence to gladden and ennoble us to all time—the memory of such being among our best and most useful possessions—true, we may render full and great thanks to Him who has made all things, and led us through it. But it is good to be *here*, good to learn to love the beating heart of London life, that throbs with vast desire, and great purposes—good to learn to turn our looks above all beauty and comfort, while our feet are upon stones; good above all to learn to say 'That Thou hast placed me here, Lord, implies that I have a work to do here.' Let us all try to pray for strength to work, but more still for power to know and fulfil God's will, to remember that to be content to receive impressions from the things God gives is an infinitely high duty. Are our hands, heads, hearts so strong and unfailing that their work is necessary instantly? Are we quite sure that the winds, grasses, voices of friends, histories of countries, can do nothing to teach us? Shall we plunge into the whirlpool of life, knowing so little that the whirlpool seems all, and the great, deep, calm, distant strength of the mighty sea is unremembered? With many, many earnest wishes that the rolling years may bring you continual and great peace, believe me, my own Minnie,

Your very affte. sister,

OCTAVIA

To M. H.

July 15, 1857

If you could see M., tender, gentle, watchful, thoughtful, unwearying in her unceasing care for those around her. I love her more and more every day. She always reminds me of sunlight on meadows bordered with elms. As the day goes on the shadows move slowly on, the light steals round gently, unperceptibly, but ever welcome and blessed, showing the blue of the bugloss in the grass, the purple of the clover, the white and gold of the daisy, the movement of myriad tiny insects, but often unnoticed itself; born to light, but not to be seen; to show, not to be shown; but, like all true beings most beautiful in the eyes of the few who are given power to appreciate it, in thus doing the work of the time.—The vivid, darting lightning is not capable of throwing the kind of continual glory on all which surrounds it, that the sunlight does; true, it may glow with mighty fire, showing cloud-forms between the earth, and it may stand out in terrible wonderful distinctness, but it shows no forms made out in light and shade, and the glory it sheds is but that of a moment, it vanishes in the darkness of the night. So come and go many powers, doubtless spiritual, as well as material, gifted with strength, but not with eternity, with light but not with patience to shine; and bright though they may be, they shall vanish, and no grass or daisy shall miss them, neither shall man mourn for them, for they loved not enough to linger with any human thing; or, if they loved, their will was not strong, or their haste was overmuch; they shall pass, happy if, like the lightning, they have cooled the air. But such human souls rather heat it;

indeed, furious blazing is often the vain attempt to warm human hearts. But the constant, silent, never-wearying love of the sunlight will ever win more love in God's world.

To M. H.

July 28, 1857

The elder Toy-Makers had attended some Natural History Classes at the Working Men's College, so to-day I took the children to the British Museum, and they were much interested in going over the ground in the presence of the animals. I related *your* story of the tiger, with eight eager eyes looking on, and the children devoured every word. Oh, these delicious little breaks in the routine, they are so refreshing!

I have been working hard, and therefore am happy to-day, and have been singing as one only can when one feels absolutely free, and, to increase my good spirits, a letter has come to say that Miranda is returning.

I am getting on very well at the College now I have the teaching. It is very difficult for me to work with zeal and not be supreme. I feel how much I wish to reach the spirits of these women. Oh, the ice and lead that is between our hearts, the reserve, the carelessness about one another's love, the want of warm sympathy! It was the same with the Toy Workers once. I could not sit down and teach them what twice three was, till they knew how much three flowers or three friends were worth. People talk about the absurdity of teaching crochet before dressmaking. Oh! the worse absurdity of teaching needlework or anything else till you have warmed the heart and unfrozen the tongue. I long to

put away slates and sing a merry song, or repeat a pathetic story or verse. These people certainly act up to Mr. Simpson's rule of right about expression of feeling. You would not know they had any if you could not love them, and let love interpret the controlled looks. I may do some good; surely I ought to hope so.

To M. H.

September 9, 1857

On Monday I received a business-like letter asking me to call with samples of toys between one and six that day on a Mr. A., near London Bridge, as he had an order for a wholesale house in India. Of all opportunities of seeing the bad in men, that I know of, I think to call about an order is the very best. I had no one else to send, so I set out as bravely as I could. Mr. A. and his man were about as disagreeable as people can well be; but, long before I got there, I felt I did not mind the least. They talked and scolded, and I stayed quite quiet. At last they sent the toys for Mrs. A. to see; and her husband, beginning to find that he might just as well speak more civilly, and seeing that he did not the least disprove the truth of anything I said, which was what he wanted to do, began with a rough kindness to show me the sort of toys we had to compete with. Soon the messenger returned, and after consulting aside with him, Mr. A. came up and said in a half-commanding tone: 'You must take a large discount off these prices.' 'I told you I was prepared to do so on a wholesale order,' said I. 'What discount do you propose?' '20 per cent.' 'Very well, 20 per cent.' 'Do you know what 20 per cent is?' 'Yes.' 'Well, come, what is it?' 'One-fifth.' 'Quite

right, I did not mean to doubt you.' He evidently *had*, and I don't the least wonder, though I hold that I managed all this matter in a most business-like way. He then said he would make out the order and send it by post, and he wished me good-morning quite kindly, and in a most gentlemanly manner showed me out. I was happy, very happy. I felt that quiet truth had overcome noisy selfishness. I was glad I had been myself. It depends on the amount of the order, whether we shall be able to continue to employ the children, or give up the business.

To M. H.

November 1, 1857

At Mrs. Wilson's, my sister's old nurse (now wife of a tailor), I met an old carpenter to pay him some money. He had not seen me since I was a wild child at Finchley, leaping ditches and climbing trees, and he seemed a little appalled at my dignified, quiet, half-sad manner. He brought his account wonderfully well written. After a minute or two, I asked him about his wife and children, and all the old Finchley people. I saw, as in reality, the past child life again. I saw the stream in the field I loved so well, where day after day I played. The old man, elated by being paid, wondering at the room he saw me in, which, I suppose, he thought was my home, perhaps forgetting the past years, and wondering at the change in me, stood contemplating me for a minute or two and then said with a puzzled look: 'Makes one feel old, don't it now.' Evidently he had been tracing the child's face, perhaps thinking of the time when he gave me so many bits of wood for boats, and pronounced me 'Precious clever' for my skill in carpentry. 'Well,

Miss, I'm sure me and my Missus is mighty obliged, and I do hope, Miss, you'll have a turn one of these days.' The kind, patronizing manner made me smile, in spite of all the gathered gloom and vivid memories. I hardly saw the old man go; but ever since, I think of the scene with an amusement that mingles strangely with its sadness. To me these bits of life and deep feeling have a peculiar worth, the character contrasts, the soul where one reckons only for formality, refresh and interest me. I feel in these things that which gives to outward actions their interest and delight.

To M. H.

November 3, 1857

It seems to me that an extended sphere of usefulness is being opened for me by the trust that Mr. Maurice and Miss Sterling[1] are gaining in my knowledge of who wants help, which they entrust me to give.

To M. H.

November 3, 1857

I heard a knock at the door. Minnie went. There stood in the room a small sobbing figure, the head bent down to the hands, which were held up to the ends of a little triangular knitted shawl to dry the tears. Minnie spoke: 'Ockey, here's Robin come to see you, she's very unhappy.' I took her to the fire, made her sit down and tell her story, when the sobs had a little ceased. Father had turned her out, she said. He had often threatened to do so, when her mother lived. He 'never

[1] Miss Julia Sterling, daughter of John Sterling, whose *Life* Carlyle wrote.

couldn't bear her.' He had moved from where he lived, and she didn't know where he'd gone to live. She had slept 'agin the door' of a room where her mother had once lived when she had left her husband. Her poor mother had been 'dead and gone these eighteen months.' I said she must warm herself and have some breakfast. 'Oh,' she said, 'I have had some, for I watched for my brother coming to work, and he was with another little errand-boy and they give me some bread and butter,' which she produced from under her arm. 'And they give me threepence, too.'

Now I must tell you that Robin is a little girl nicknamed so from her bright eyes, really called Amelia. She had worked for a short time with me at the Toys, and she had now come to ask for employment. We now made her wash herself and put on some cleaner clothes, warm herself, and have some breakfast. Fancy the little stunted girl of 14, bright rosy cheeks, large quick, startled eyes, longish bright hair, dressed in an old dress of Florence's, given her nearly three years ago; now made with short sleeves, showing the long arms, thin, when not swollen by ill usage, the little stooping figure crouching over the fire and eagerly drinking the proffered tea. This hardly touched me more than the dress which recalled Florence. Outcast and hopeless, broken in spirit by cold and fatigue, come what might, if no one else could be found to help her, we must. I took her to Mrs. Wilson's. On the way she talked, 'Father has beaten me, oh, he has such a cane' (her whole frame seemed to shrink), 'such a thin un, but he didn't use *that* for he couldn't find it.' The latter words being said in a significant exulting tone, I thought: 'Has she

destroyed it?' 'But, Robin,' said I, 'I hope you tried to be good and to help your father.' 'Well, of course, I tried to do what I could to stop at home.' Here was a motive. I walked on in the sunshine; the odd little thing trudging along beside me. I took her to Mrs. Wilson's and went home. Next morning Mrs. Wilson came to say that Robin had slipped away by stealth. I determined to go to where her brother works, but he had gone on an errand, so we sat on a log of wood waiting for his return, and watched the tide of poverty flow past. When he returned he gave us his mother's address.

A low archway led through a way, now half obstructed by a heap of dirt, to a wide paved court swarming from end to end with numberless children, ringing with their deafening voices, a wild scene; three girls danced the polka, two swung another round and turned my head giddy; a great boy rushed heedlessly before us, and a little one sat flat on the stones, his feet apart, and stared at us with a very dirty face. The rest are in my memory but as a crowd of blighted lives, wearying to think of. The gay spring fields, the village green, the bright brooks should have surrounded the young beings at that age when most subtle, enduring impressions are sealed on the soul. Oh, for power to cast away from them the misery around, to remove them from air poisoned and close, to give them God's free light, for here from side to side, from window to window at every height were clothes lines hung with clothes till the court was darkened.

We had heard that Robin's father sold coals, so on seeing a board, black with coal-dust, stating the quantity of coal to be obtained for fivepence, we approached. Down into a dark coal-cellar we looked through a hole like

a small area; a ladder led to it, leaning against which, on the coals below, sat a girl and two very young children. We spoke. The girl looked up. It was Robin. She recognized us, her large eyes almost seemed starting from her head with terror. I never can forget the look of hopeless terror on her face. She could not speak. A man told us where her mother lived. We went. A hard, short, loveless woman met us at the door, her arms crossed. 'Yes, her daughter had run away, very bad girl she was, a liar. You couldn't believe a word she said, she'd come in with such stories, not to screen a fault, she'd excuse that, but out of wickedness. Oh, she'd come back safe enough. She was such a thief, too, one couldn't keep a thing from her. Yes, her father beat her often; he didn't like her, grudged her every bit she ate, often said he'd turn her out; she ought to work for him and for herself, too; she led too easy a life, not anything to do but nurse the child and sit and mind the cellar there. She hadn't been going to beat her the day she ran away. Oh, no, didn't want to part with her, should as soon as the baby grew older. Bad girl, very bad,' &c.

So now we are trying to learn about refuges and training schools.

Robin was placed in an Industrial Home at Brighton, and Octavia made the whole of the outfit, getting up at five o'clock to do so, before her long day's work.—E. S. M.

To M. H.

November 15, 1857

I am quite alone and shall be all the morning. It is a bright, delicious winter day. All I look at seems to speak of gladness, quiet working gladness, that is holy

and peaceful and very blessed from its connection with daily duties, very cheerful, because it is not a gladness that should be always of memory or hope, but of perpetual calm. I looked this year with tearful eyes and a sensation of choking at the chrysanthemums in all the square gardens, remembering how you sent me some last year and they seemed to say, as the poppies did, 'You shall have none.' But now the room is bright with poppies, for at the College the other day, as I was sitting writing, I heard a step and looking up saw the brown, good-natured face of the charwoman. She held a large bunch of them, and laying them down beside me, said, 'I knowed you was fond of flowers like me, so there's for you, to see the work of the Almighty God in their faces.' She popped downstairs in a moment, not waiting for thanks. It is as if God would say to me, 'The hands which give flowers their peculiar preciousness, shall seldom touch them for you; the entire freshness of country flowers shall seldom be yours, but here in your working life from working people you shall receive gifts. Trust Me and take from Me that I give, and your daily life shall have a glory you could not ever imagine. Work and memory shall be bound together in a strong whole, dependent on one another. The work shall give strength, the memory shall give faith, hope, and cheerfulness. I am as a Father, and prepare all things for you.'

To M. H.

November 29, 1857

I want to send you a few of my drawings, but must not till Ruskin has seen them. You will not know all that is connected with every line of them, but you will know

that there is very much. Look at the Chivery[1] one, and fancy how all the little flowers clustering round the stem speak of union and support, which could not be known by the separate flowers, think how every line of beauty spoke of a love greater than any earthly one. Look then at the Virginian creeper and its companion, all of London growth, telling of the smoky wall and dusty earth, where they struggled to live in glorious beauty, and could only live in solitary sorrow, but with a strength of heart which bore a message to the other inhabitants of London. Look at the careful outlines, which were obliged to be careful, or they would have had no value at all, so little spirit, so little admiration could those smoky leaves call up. Imagine, too, that whenever I was left to do London things there had, of course, been no bright country visits or presents from it, so it tells of prolonged days of work. Notice, then, how the nightshade and nettle, by their natural loveliness, by their connection with the painful world, call up a greater power because a greater love; see the look of life which they have because one force is present in every part of them. Then try to imagine, for I cannot tell, the thoughts that crowded round, as I drew the ground-ivy, scenes that are past, and also remember it as a type of those who, though beautiful in themselves, when carefully and lovingly contemplated near, have an infinitely greater, fuller, deeper loveliness, when by thousands they glow together beneath the sun; those whose humble, yet glorious work, is to light the lowest places with their beauty drawn from the sun, the source of all light. The page with the hawthorn and eye-bright I send, because the

[1] The home of a relation.

latter has for me a peculiar pathos; it is some P—— brought for us, in the fullness of his heart. You know why I send the bramble with its wild suffering strength. If these drawings bring you any messages about daily working life here, I shall be glad; it is all I want, for in themselves they are very imperfect and poor. If they whisper to you of any of the sorrows of life here, I shall never regret it. I shall even be glad, for, if they do, they must also tell of its joys; for it is suffering that endears all to us, and binds us into one, for it calls out faith, it calls for sacrifice, for patience, and as all strong feeling felt by two people draws them together, and makes them understand one another, so I bless all sorrow in my deepest heart, only asking that it may do its appointed work of uniting not separating.

To M. H.

December 22, 1857

As we were coming out of Lincoln's Inn, Miss Sterling told us that Mr. Maurice would preach that evening at Spottiswood's. I had heard of Spottiswood as a great printer, who cared for his workpeople's welfare, and had classes for them. Minnie and I started. We reached Fetter Lane with its miserable inhabitants, flaring gas, great tall houses, propped up by enormous blocks of wood, half painted white. We reached New Square, and asked for Spottiswood's church, and were directed up yet narrower, darker streets, where in a great gateway a man's form would stand out for a minute between the gas and your eyes, and then vanish in the darkness, or stagger idly on. The mud was something wonderful, and a strange contrast with all the wretchedness was produced by the distant sound of church bells behind

us. A girl told us that Mr. Spottiswood had service in his own house, at number 11 at the end here. So we came to a narrow street, with very high houses, very old, evidently built when that part of London was the residence of great men. Three young men stood on the doorstep, and we asked for the church. One very kindly took us in. We stood in a great old hall, hung with portraits; every place well lighted; a splendid glass case full of ferns caught my eye. At the top of the house were two large rooms thrown into one, one of which ran all along one side of the house, the other forming an L. Part was heightened for the singers, by the ceiling being removed, showing solid oak beams, from which hung gas lamps of blue and gold. At the end of this part of the room was a communion-table, and a stained-glass window. All along the wall were ground-glass windows with some emblem painted in red. The small organ was against the wall. The singers, about ten young men, were evidently workmen. Mr. Spottiswood played the organ himself. On the walls were many beautiful engravings, Christ the Consoler by Scheffer, &c., and one most exquisite chalk drawing of the Madonna, nearly life size. The whole room was fitted up like a church. The congregation consisted of workmen and their families, the employers and theirs, the clerks and servants. I should guess about 70 in all. The clergyman, who entoned the service, was evidently a Puseyite, which Miranda in her bigotry has been mourning ever since I came in, but I saw too much in the large, sad, earnest eyes to care whether he preached in black or white,[1] or to doubt

[1] Hitherto the clergy had preached in black gowns; the wearing of the white surplice was considered ritualistic.

that in more important points he, too, is being led home. See him, then, a pattern Puseyite, pale worn face (wasted with fasting), evidently with fears and sorrows about the intense wickedness of the world and its ways, probably a believer in the superior righteousness of celibacy. Great large dark eyes, large forehead, very small chin, smooth, short black hair parted in the middle, and so smoothed and pressed that evidently no hair could have a will of its own. Strange type was it of the complete subjection of the man's spirit, all human nature, good and bad alike, subdued and kept in order, and still his great dark eyes saying how wicked he thought himself. The people joined in the service with great sincerity. And the sermon. Mary, I wish you could have heard it. I will try to tell you a little of it, but how little can I tell you, even of the words, of the voice, manner, face—nothing. It was a peculiar delight to me to-night, for the first time for months, to see Mr. Maurice's face as he preached, for I have grown too short-sighted to see at Lincoln's Inn anything but a dim light against the darker wall.

Mr. Maurice ended his sermon by saying that if we cannot recall the joy we used to feel at Christmas, 'Let us recover the real faith and we shall recover the real joy. Christmas, which gathers together the members of families, must remind us very forcibly of those whose vacant places are left, whom we see no more; but let it remind us, too, that they and we are bound together in that Lord, whose birth we are celebrating, that He has suffered and known deeper sorrow than we are knowing, that He understands it; we are not alone in it. Let us ask at our Christmas gathering that He will bind

us all more closely together, more closely to Himself, and pour into our hearts all perfect trust which brings joy, prayer, thanksgiving and peace.'

To M. H.

July 31, 1858

The bramble is to me so full of signs, as well as beauties; the spring and fall of its sprays, the glorious colour of its autumn leaves, the strong, sharp, talon-like thorns, and its wild, luxuriant growth alone would endear it to me; but, besides all that, it carries, like all thorned plants, the mark of sorrow, the human mark, and the mark of the deepest sorrow, in that it has power to give pain. And in winter, when there is but little warmth around it, that power stands out in fearful distinctness, as in frozen hearts; it bears this sign into every place alike, in the rich greenwood, and by the long meadow grass, by little streams, or on the barest moor; but it cannot go out into the world only to show sorrow and evil, and pain; it must bear some Gospel to the cottager's boy, and to the weary tramp; and so it says, whenever it puts out its shoots, that being human it has life in itself called out by another's warmth, that that life, when developed, shall hide forever, or failing to do so, shall be ever struggling to subdue sorrow, sin, suffering; that in that struggle the beauty of the plant shall come forth in snow-white flowers touched with pink or purple, signs of life and kingly power, and that at last, when its work is done, its fruit perfected, its leaves in dying shall throw around them such glory that the whole region shall glow again. Then it says that, standing as an emblem of sorrow, it is a ladder by which all manner of beings

climb towards heaven, being strengthened by it; that the wild bindweed, the gorgeous bryony, and the honeysuckle shall all rise by means of it. There is, too, an almost touching appeal in the way it flings up its arms towards the blue September sky, as if in prayer. Ever wild, ever strong, ever beautiful.

I hope you will continue to visit Newgate. You must not be lost to the many who need you.

To M. H.

1858?

To-night we are going out to tea!!! And with whom? With the kind of people who always like me most unaccountably—old ladies. Two queer desolate old ladies, one stout, quiet, because ponderous, in manner slow, conceited, but very lonely. She is an authoress and much likes reciting her poems! The other quick, noisy, active, an enormous talker, and a very old acquaintance of our family. Both gesticulate very much, but one makes fifty movements in the time that the other makes one. Why do I go? Nay, that I can't tell, unless it is for the sake of pleasing Mamma and because on Sunday I have no excuse for staying at home but my own pleasure. Partly perhaps because I have felt so strongly how wrong it has been of me to enter so little into the lives of people with whom I have been placed, when those lives have been connected with society. Character is too delightful a study to me for it to be any trouble to watch it; often, however, I feel that the view obtained is so superficial, I am only too glad to keep away. Only desolate people, whether old ladies or any one else, I go to instantly.

To M. H.

October 24, 1858

I have the prospect of what is more precious to me than comfort or ease—a little more regular paid work, and such delightful work, teaching drawing! You hardly know how solemnly I feel about money, so that the want or possession of it are serious lessons to me. I try to read their meaning, and say: 'See, this was wrong, this was careless; or in this you listened to God's voice, and He is blessing you.' I feel in all that concerns money how life and hope are untouched by troubles, and that when my efforts are crowned with success it is a sign that my desires have been in accordance with God's will.

To M. H.

1859

I rise about 7, dress slowly, do needlework for Robin, breakfast, reading Arnold, then I draw and think; if the connection of any passage in my books with the train of thought strikes me, and if I want to follow it up, I get the book and do so, and such long, deep, delightful vistas of thought open before me. I glory in the silence, and the things around me seem to have all the life and importance that they have to children; all the flowers seem to have such real and distinct life, and as for David and Saul, and all the men of old, they seem to be really breathing.

To M. H.

February 23, 1859

Friday evening we sang at Brewer's Court, a poor court in Bethnal Green. It was a delightful sight, and I

shall never forget Miranda's singing of 'He shall Feed His Flock,' the perfect simplicity and reality of it, the full, sweet voice, and all the careworn faces turned to hers. Two of our tenants went to help with the singing.

To M. H.

June 5

I feel it dreadfully sad to have to give up singing and study, but I cannot study after the immense exertion of my days. I rise at 5 to do needlework, two evenings I teach drawing. Saturday is occupied with mending and accounts, and all extra work must be done in the evening. The journeys to Dulwich add to my fatigue; but I am trying to go a little more into society, it rests Mamma.

To M. H.

June 24, 1859

I spent Wednesday with the Howitts.[1] It was very delightful to find them so simple in their tastes, so contented and unstriving. There were Mr. Howitt and Charlton at work, early and late, at their beloved garden, talking about tame birds and pea-sticks as if there were no noise and bustle in London, and Maggie seems quite indifferent about parties and frivolities.

I have learnt to feel satisfied about Miss Rogers's life out of England, in an uncivilized country. I feel, from all she told me of her doings among the poor childish Moslem women there, that it is a good and blessed work which she is peculiarly fitted to perform. I have no

[1] William and Mary Howitt, poet and poetess, see *Life and Letters*.

sympathy with, no admiration for, those who try to *force their* notions, *their* faiths on every one; who decidedly set to work to convert people. I believe I am not a less true member of the Church for this. I believe her creeds and ordinances to be meant for all men, to have in them that which can satisfy all men, but if I did not know that God was teaching all who seek right, if I did not see that they are often more right than I am, I should soon lose all faith that He is ruling His Church. It is true that I like that the words which signify to me something blessed and true should not signify to my friends cant and falsehood, but, even if they do, I know that it is not the blessedness and the truth that my friends war with; we only differ as to whether they are there. I have all honour for those who strive to make men better and truer, who are sure that in so doing they are doing the will of their Father in Heaven, who state clearly what they believe, when the occasion calls for it, who have the penetration to feel when there is a want felt, and supply it by revelation of truth, knowing they are bidden to do so by God. I have little or no sense of whether the people with whom I work are members of the Church or not; I feel always keenly their sympathy with justice and love, or their antagonism to it. And yet it is not that I am setting up a moral nature above the knowledge of God, but I don't think that we can tell how much anyone knows of Him. One fact about Him well burnt into a heart with life's fires, and pressed into it with life's pain, conforms a child more to His likeness than colder acceptance of facts. People wonder that I will recommend teachers for Unitarian Sunday Schools. The result be on their head not mine. I would always

rather say, 'Come and work with me.' I always do say it. When it is refused, I cannot feel that it is better to leave earnest workers idle in the market-place. It makes me vexed when I see the increase of affection felt by X when anyone belongs to the Church. I cannot bear to come in for any share of such a feeling when I know people a million times better than I am would be excluded. 'Expect more from me if you will,' I feel inclined to say, 'reproach me that I have done so little, have walked so unworthy of my calling; don't honour me for God's blessing; don't think I have had a larger share than one who is truer and braver than I.' We have tried it, Mary, have not we? Thou and I are not further off from one another because we have not attended the same place of worship. God, not churches and creeds, binds us together.

To M. H.

November 6, 1859

Thou wilt receive in a few days my St. Michael, emblem of that strength that should belong to all Christian lives, strength to conquer, and also to bear. I believe I shall not remain at the College much longer. It is satisfactory, if change must come, that it should be because work is completed, given into better hands, one's own having in no way failed. I should have dreaded to put myself out of communication with people so wise and noble as Mr. Maurice and Miss Sterling, but I dare not fear the break, coming as it will. For my drawing I cannot but feel deeply thankful; any other work that I undertake I shall try to make fragmentary, giving place easily to this, my great life-work.

To M. H.

103, Milton Street
December 1859

Mary Harrison (Mary Howitt's niece) came to see me. I delight in my friends seeing my home. I triumph in its growing comfort, order, and beauty, and yet I seemed, when the time came, to see it as compared with what it should be, not with what it has been. So much better than three years ago. Yes, but should it not be? Everything one feels is imperfect. Thou would grieve if thou could see it, only thou would have to remember that my hands have to do many things for which they were not trained, and have little time for doing all that wants doing and that others can't do.

We had moved from furnished rooms into unfurnished, and while our mother was away, Octavia had bought the furniture and made the rooms very pretty to receive her on her return.—E. S. M.

To M. H.

January 15, 1860

I went to Brighton to see Robin in the Industrial School. She will leave in June, and I want to meet with a place for her as under-nurse. She will be 16 years old, and unfortunately short, but strong. All her best feelings would be called out, for she loves children dearly. I took her a walk on the sands, and she told me about all the children she had seen and known. 'The *dear* little things,' as she said. I should love to have that girl to train. The affection, earnestness, and the deep settled sorrow in the young thing draw me to her much. Her want of truth, which they hope is now cured, is less

terrible, because it arises from intense timidity, which is so great that she appears perfectly stupefied in the presence of those whom she fears, and it is little to be wondered at in one beaten, kicked, and untaught, as she was. Her nervousness has made her suffer dreadfully at school, and she has found consolation in unchildlike things. She told me of her great longing to possess the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and said she liked best about where Christian got to the Wicket Gate and where he entered the Celestial City. Poor child, as if she loved to hear of success and peace. I recognized the old determination in her resolute way of finding the texts the clergyman set them to find, and in the firmness with which she looked forward to the power of helping 'them at home.' Her mother is now a widow with 7 children.

To M. H.

1861

We think of taking a house, 14 Nottingham Place, and we know of several people who would like to be with us, and then I think what influences me most of all is that I could have my little Robin with me. Miranda and Florence return from Italy in the Spring.

I am to try for a first-class certificate in Mathematics at Queen's College.

To M. H.

April 7, 1861

To-day we all received the Communion at Vere Street. I told Mr. Maurice that my sisters were there, and he came out of the Vestry and shook hands many times with Miranda and said how delighted he was to see her back, and that he would call to-morrow.

To M. H.

December 2, 1861

How strangely memories of past years rise in connection with anniversaries, suggesting all the changes that passing time has brought, and all that it cannot bring. The eternal things all safe from power of destruction, seem sometimes the most precious of all. And again, when one thinks of the marvellous growth He has brought they seem more to be prized still. As to what He takes away, which people talk so much about, those seem to me only the outside things, which, however lovely, however dearly-loved, are not the essence of what we care for. The essential thing they meant to us is ours, if only by the promise: 'He shall bring all things to your remembrance.' How they seem floating up clear and distinct across long years to-night—love, and hopes, and joys of long ago, passion and pain with the clearer sight of what they meant and why they came. . . . By God's grace I will try to use such memories only to make more earnest efforts to live as He would have me live, and to do whatever He gives me power to do for His children. On me, if ever it was laid on anyone, is laid the injunction: 'Freely hast thou received, freely give.'

To M. H.

14 Nottingham Place

April 27, 1862

Ruskin is coming on Wednesday. It must anyway be a wonderful night. He comes to see our home before leaving England. I feel rather sadly how little of it he can see. Its life can only be seen in daily work, and we

have hardly any beautiful things even now; but it shall look its best. By the way, the dear, lovely Virginian creeper, nursed tenderly in my bedroom till now, was brought down to-day for its home to be fixed. I wanted to put it in fifty places: Mamma's quiet room, our little sanctum, seems to want it so much, trained round the window, and every one of the walls round the leads upon which we look cried out for it, so did the railing near them, and yet one would have liked to place it in front, where it would gladden the eyes of passers-by, and I so wanted it where it would greet me every morning, round the bars for plants outside my window, the dear thing with its tender long shoots and leaves so full of promise. I put it finally on a wall facing the south, where we shall see it well from Mamma's window—our quiet room. It seems to bind me to that one against your house, looking towards the mountains. Oh, Spring is hard to bear in London. Ungrateful wretch that I am! I don't quite mean that.

To M. H.

April 27, 1862

I went to see a poor woman whose little boy had died on Easter Sunday. On coming out E. said that she wished she had not seen the dead child. I asked her why, and she replied: 'It was so painful.' I have been thinking much of those words; they sounded strange. I did not answer them; they ring in my ears with increasing strangeness. So painful! Yes, that was exactly what we went for, what we expected. Is not all shared pain a positive gain, a positive bond? Had I been E., being even myself whose work is far away from that mother, I could thank

God for having let me suffer in gazing on the little face. I had never known it alive, and the memory is rather of the dead child than of death; but even that amount of pain I feel a blessing. I can better tell how a mother feels when she cries out: 'If I could but hear him speak one word.' And if ever I saw that woman again there would be a deep, unspoken sense of sympathy and knowledge; and I would not for anything have made that lonely grief yet lonelier by not sharing it. So painful. Yes; and yet the tender 'Bless his little heart,' the faithful 'His father has two now, and I have four' (all live unto Him), live more in my memory than half-closed eyes and deathly face; painful, but not so strange as heartlessness, frivolity, or any evil.

To M. H.

Undated

Robin came up to me last week. She wants a place as under-housemaid. She is so nice and gentle and good, poor child. She has been four times to the College to find me, and I never heard of it.

Robin is now our servant; she is quiet and self-possessed. On my return from my holiday some large feather-flowers decorated my room; Robin's photograph was left there directed to me, and my initials were written in pins; but, except these silent child-marks of her, we have had no intercourse; my whole time, every moment of the day, being full of work.

Later on Robin emigrated to Australia and married very happily. She sent photos of her children to Octavia, remembering with gratitude all that had been done for her.—E. S. M.

To M. H.

November 23, 1862

I went to see poor Mrs. Shaw, whose husband had just died the day before.[1] He has been a long sufferer, and a patient one; he died quietly at home, attended with love which I never saw equalled among the poor. His wife, a gentle, humble, *faithful* woman, was sitting with her niece and a friend, and answered when I asked how she was: 'Well, of course, Miss, having had my work so long I miss it.' And then the tears fell thick and fast. She told me that a fresh doctor had been called in on Sunday, who had said: 'Well, Mr. Shaw, do you think you will get better?' 'Oh, no, sir.' 'Have you any wish to live?' 'Oh, no, Sir.' 'You think you are prepared for death?' 'Yes, Sir, quite.' 'What do you believe?' 'I'm very weak. You mustn't question me too much. I believe in God, and that is enough.'

The quiet, faithful dignity of the answer brought back vividly all I had known of the man, whose faith was far too real either to deny itself, or to cast off reserve, if not most reverently touched. His true instinct had recognized Mr. Maurice instantly, and he clung to the memory of him. His only wish for longer life was that he might once more see Mr. Maurice, who, however, only returned to London the day Mr. Shaw died. Mr. Shaw had written the most touching lines in a Bible Mr. Maurice had given him, when he told him that he could no longer see any but large print. These words were a touching farewell, badly written, but full of thought,

[1] Shaw was consumptive from working in an unhealthy shop. The family lived in a cellar.—E. S. M.

and exactly the right thought, too. The last lines were a prayer for guidance of those left, and mercy for himself, every word full of quiet assurance. I read them alone with his wife, in the room where he lay, while she gazed on him with all tender love, saying: 'I always thought it hard to bury the children, but this——' and then she had no words to express what it was. What struck me most about it all was the quiet thankfulness and peace with which she looked back to their life together, telling me that 'he went happy for he'd nothing to reproach himself with; he'd always been the best of husbands and fathers, and a quiet, studying man.' In removing the cover she said, 'There's nothing to be afraid of, I'm not afraid. I know I've done all I could for him, and so I can look on him quite quiet.' She jealously avoided even the sound of a speech, which might seem to grudge service given. In speaking of her little girl of nine she said, 'Yes, Miss, I shall send her to school now; she's been by her father's side always, and that's how she's missed schooling, though I'm sure she couldn't learn anything that would be better than what she saw in him, for he was always a good man.' Mr. Maurice and Miss Sterling and we all have, from the first, been deeply impressed with the whole family. I wish I could give you any idea of the quiet trust and righteousness. It filled me with the deepest humility and thankfulness. Mr. Maurice was so kind to-day, and oh, he preached such a splendid sermon.

In 1863 Octavia and her sisters began a school at 14, Nottingham Place, of which a full account is given in the *Life and Letters*, by C. Edmund Maurice, from which a short extract is given below. A few letters have been selected from

the many showing Octavia's interest in and deep sympathy with her pupils.—E. S. M.

'With regard to the school, which was to supply so many zealous and sympathetic helpers for Octavia's work, it will be noted that all the four sisters had shown an early interest in education; and while Octavia and Emily carried on the teaching at Nottingham Place, in which Florence afterwards shared, Miranda was managing a day-school for the children of small tradesmen and artisans. The Nottingham Place school was originally intended only for a few children of intimate friends. But the growth of the numbers, and Octavia's additional work in the management of houses, induced Miranda, in 1866, to give up her separate teaching, and to become the head of the Nottingham Place school.'—*Life and Letters of Octavia Hill.*

To M. H.

14, Nottingham Place, W.
1863

I think the further I go from my own childhood the more children's little natures are revealed to me, and a great pity and love for them grow on me, as though I saw how deeply all that came in youth would impress them for the years to come. To me, now, nothing that comes can alter in great degree what I am, but the old child-times have written certain lessons indelibly; the things one loved then have a certain indefinable charm, and I long to make children's lives noble and happy. And my little flock at home, do you think that my heart is not very much with them, my own dear children? Somehow, the bond between us seems to grow deeper, and I fear it is not that I have learnt to understand them better, but they me; more and more do I feel a sort of call in them for

the best teaching I can give. They ask me questions that make me feel, in answering, as if I were speaking almost like a prophet of the things that are and will be, speaking to those who will have to work, and live, after I am gone, telling them what a wonderful life has taught me, saying to them, It isn't about actions I can tell you; your duties may be vastly different from mine, but thus and thus, and thus, I have known it to be; if you can believe *this*, life will prove it true to you. The old fire, that is gone for action, flames often in me. I can feel it almost burning my eyes, when I speak to them of the faith in God that may be a sure rock to them from the shame and sins of this age. And the children begin to care to listen, and sometimes, when they have begged me much to go up and talk to them at night before I go to bed, and I sit there all wearied and worn, and they tell me of their day's doings, and we fall on some great subject of principle or spiritual fact, I wonder at the might of this strange spiritual life we lead that can glow and burn, while the face grows paler, and the frame weaker, I wonder what work will next be given to a power so mighty, and what punishment for the wasted physical strength.

. . . . .

Why the children love me so now I cannot tell. Perhaps there is something strange to them in the far-away look with which I know I do all things, my main thoughts being for ever away with the tenants. Children are so much better if they do not feel themselves the main object of actions and words, and yet are regularly attended to and made to fulfil all their duties. Their

sympathy in work for others is far better for them often than your sympathy with them.

To M. H.

September 4, 1864

L. H. is here, a small, neat, quiet, confiding child, very self-reliant and energetic about all her duties, unpacking and arranging and being punctual without one word of direction, mending nine pairs of stockings while A. and E. each mend one, having made up her mind that she shall like being here extremely, asking what she is to do instead of 'gaping around' as Florence said to me. She is uninteresting as yet, except from her pleasant child-confidence, but promising to be a help from being already trained to unselfishness.

G. and J. are touching girls with long thin necks, dressed simply, but without any taste, looking somehow as if their ugly appearance would be a pain to them. I could imagine their telling in after-years that they felt lonely and ugly, longing for crinolines and nets, but I may be wrong. G. is advanced, and has been well taught, is a little supercilious, the least in life resenting one's probing the elements of her knowledge, which are sound, as it happens, but how can a teacher tell that by instinct? The parents of G. and J. are rather awful; they evidently disapprove of rowing, croquet, gymnastics, and things in general. The girls I like better.

To M. H.

July 9, 1865

On Friday, Mary and Mary Eliza (former pupils) were confirmed. It was such a beautiful ceremony, and

touched me deeply. They were both exceedingly impressed, very gentle and subdued. The sun shone with wonderful brightness and all things looked beaming in its light. I could not help thinking of the day of Mary Eliza's baptism, now some years ago, which was dark and wet, and heavily overhung with difficulties and effort. I remembered the weary walk to the somewhat dismal church, the difficulty of finding time to go, the pathetic look of the little figure, so frail, so uncouth, so undeveloped, and so friendless. How little then did I think of seeing her honoured and beloved and successful; her sweet, quiet face beaming with thoughts that were almost too much for the large grave eyes. Trench,[1] who confirmed them, spoke most beautifully to us, speaking first of the bonds to those who were to be confirmed, and of '*most* holy natural affection,' those, too, of spiritual guidance and care. The first expression struck me much, as showing how our age had grown since that of St. Bernard, whose funeral sermon for his brother, lovely as it is, shows how much he thought it necessary to excuse that 'most holy natural affection,' by explaining its ground in the devout character of his brother, as if it had not a deeper root than that. Little did St. Bernard seem to know of that love for relations having its root in relationship, clinging perhaps the more closely to the noble part of them for the sin that struggles with it. As Mary Eliza walked from the Communion-table, the sun shining full on the glad, solemn young face, her father leaned forward from the gallery to watch her; she did not know at all that he was there. I had been thinking how we were with her at her baptism, and how

[1] Afterwards Archbishop of Dublin.

typical it was now that the young things should go forward alone to confirmation, consciously and willingly acknowledging their sense of their own duties, and yet I had rather longed to be near them; and that look of a father from above on the unconscious child was a type to me of an even more loving, more watchful look that is over us, as we walk, however unconscious we may be. I could not help feeling this a comfort, for I know how likely I am to be taken from all I would guard and help, how feeble and loveless the guardianship is at its best, and how the years of power may be succeeded by years of watching another power at work. How I may trust the great people I know to train me in obedience and docility, or my power may end in failure. Still, He will assuredly not let any good thing that I have worked and prayed for fail, only take it out of my feeble hands into His strong ones; or, if I am more like Moses, He will hold up my hands till the battle is won.

To MRS. C. E. MAURICE, *from* A. C., *a former Nottingham Place pupil, September* 30, 1912, *the year of Octavia's death.*

Miss Octavia's was such sweetly-ordered wisdom, embracing all things. I once heard her say of one of the pupils, who thought that little things did not matter, that *everything* was 'a part of life.' I am sure she thought nothing was too unimportant to be done well, if done at all. Her teaching was inspiring; it was delightful to be in her drawing-class, and to be encouraged by her pleasure in her pupils' progress. She made us feel that we were working *with* her. I remember the panels we

painted for Mr. Durrant's schoolroom. It was only her enthusiasm that carried us through. I was only fourteen, and only two or three of the girls were older. We each chose a hero from her list. Just before Christmas all was finished but the lettering of the creed and commandments. Miss Miranda and I undertook these. We worked all day. This is only one example of the way in which the two dear sisters were always ready to carry out each other's plans, and their perfect sympathy.

To MRS. C. E. MAURICE, *from* M. E. C., *a former Nottingham Place Pupil.*

October 1, 1912

The memories of Miss Octavia are imperishable. Having once such a strong personality her influence must ever afterwards be felt, and ever more appreciated as the years unfold, realizing more fully the helpfulness of such sweet, strong lives. Even as a pupil in her school one recognized why she was such a power for good; the leading, dominating note in her life was her strong sense of duty. To do a thing because it was right, without question how one felt, was the example set ever before us, and prompt as an echo was the response to the fiat 'This is right to do,' and it was done.

Then how the great pitiful heart of the tender Miranda beat in unison with hers, when some one needed help, when the opportunity came to take under their ægis lives—material and spiritual—to train and educate and love. Even as a child I understood how much this meant, but the years have brought back their crescendo of admiration for the noble help given to so many and

to some who needed it sorely. Help given so cheerily and generously, as if the giving were God's own gift; and most wonderful of all the spirit of independence instilled into each recipient. I remember the kindling eye, the determined attitude, unflinching courage, the magnetic personality, as if the flame possessing her brave heart set light to our own; and *this* was what helped us all. The memory of Miranda is inseparable, in my mind, from that of Octavia—the tender, pure-hearted, sweet-souled women; and the world is richer because they lived, and because they do live.

To M. H.

June 28, 1863

Miranda is very ill, and Mr. Maurice comes repeatedly. The other night we had a long talk with him about different kinds of untruth and the way to deal with them. First, that arising from cowardice, which he said ought always to be detected, as it were convicted of its own falseness, reproved, but bravery taught. He spoke of the indifference to truth in Roman Catholic countries. He often read the Psalms to Miranda and said such beautiful things. He seemed quite to enjoy coming. In fact, Miss Sterling said to Mamma, 'It's no effort or sacrifice to Mr. Maurice to come to your daughters. He's so very fond of them.' He used to come in, so strong and calm, and yet so very full of feeling, and would startle one with the sense of watching strength and tenderness, by looking kindly at one's face, and saying: 'You look ill, do please go to lie down.' I often knew by his face that mine was pale, and remembered from it suddenly that I had forgotten I should want rest.

To M. H.

December 6, 1863

A bright and blessed day it was, Mary, a day that carried me back far into the past years, and onward with fullest hope to the years that may be, to the life that must be, and yet a day that made me feel I had grown older. I rose early, and the tender, quiet words of congratulation from the children and servants delighted and surprised me, for I did not think they knew it was my birthday. We had prayers by candle-light, and you must imagine all I thought with my little flock gathered round me. Then I went to Covent Garden for the Christmas-tree. The evening was an entire success; the poor children so good and happy, the guests so wonderfully bright, but what struck me most was the sudden discovery that the party was in the room that we rented long ago for the Ladies' Guild. There, long before I knew thee, before I knew Mr. Maurice, the first knowledge of misery and poverty came to me; the first vague hopes of relieving it, the first real feeling of poverty for ourselves. There Mamma and I had lived, the others being at Finchley. There, where the Christmas-tree stood, I had sat and watched, through the great windows, the London poor pass in rain and fog. There I sat and cried thirteen years ago at the remembrance of Tottenham Court Road on Saturday night, with its haggard faces. There the first awful wonder about why evil was permitted came to me, and I remember well saying: 'Miranda, I don't believe in a resurrection, or that if there were one it would be any blessing, because a little rest for one's brain would be the best thing. It would be very hard to get up and begin questioning and wondering again.'

There came no answer, then, to the old doubt, no power to help the evil that weighed so heavily. But now, after many years of labour and sorrow, I come back to the old place to carry out part of the old dreams of help, and to be reminded of the blessings that have been given. Maurice and Ruskin were names to which no thrill of deepest gratitude would have answered, and there is a deeper, better Name, from which these only derive their glory, which would have met with no love or reverence from me. The loneliness of the old days can never come again; it has done its work. The one Name needed was felt to be needed, and having filled all things has taken away desolation; great and small blessings crown my life with hope and peace.

There I stood, where once I stood a broken-hearted, powerless child.

To M. H.

OFFLEY COTTAGE, LUTON [1]
January 3, 1864

I do delight in a household where the father does hold great faiths, and lives consciously in God's sight, holding those near to him in the light of his own strong faith. The children have got on splendidly, in every way, and are a great joy to me; but they want very careful management.

I had the most splendid walk with Mr. Hughes and Little Jack. We are on the top of a plateau, and walked in the cold, clear air, bathed with winter afternoon

[1] Octavia was paying a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Tom Hughes. He was author of *Tom Brown's Schooldays* and a prominent Christian Socialist.—E. S. M.

sunlight, past sunny farms, through fields set with oak-trees, myriads of birds fluttering about, and great hawks sailing against the sky, over ploughed fields, and through hedges till at last we reached the edge of the plateau, folds of chalk hills, miles of sheep-walk, with lovely lines, oh, so lovely, and then the far blue distance like the hope of what may be to come, even when the present is fairest. Mr. and Mrs. Hughes have given me such a beautiful hymn-book as a New Year's gift.

To M. H.[1]

January 17, 1864

The illness is a word meant to bring some message to her, and those who love her. What mighty Love has given our Father the entire knowledge that teaches Him when He shall say: 'Remember that thou wilt come to me.' How entirely it must make us trust Him in that time when He shall say 'Come to me.' Some great woe escaped, some bitter lesson to be taught, some blessed reunion with those who have gone before, and a great heart-hunger of those who are left behind—these and better things than we have dreamed He may mean. Oh, Mary, I hardly dare write to thee, when I think to what voice of God thou mayest be listening.

To M. H.

January 24, 1864

Infinite mercy has been with us to spare the little life; mercy we shall perhaps forget in moments when small troubles gather round us, but which will abide with us through them all, whether great or small, when we will

[1] Mary Harris's little niece was dangerously ill.—E. S. M.

accept the gracious promise of Christ's to bring all things to our remembrance. We had wished to listen together to Mr. Maurice's voice, and we were called to listen together to God's voice, at one of those times when it speaks so near to us in the whirlwind. And yet I think sometimes its very nearness and the distinctness with which it is known as His, make it more like the still small voice in times of awe, than like the whirlwind; for there is at such times a great hush over the soul, as of waiting for the decision of an infinite Love; all outward things glide past us, as of no moment, hardly known, and we are quite alone with Him who loves us. We had wished to pray together, and we pray together how differently! So often does God answer our small prayers by His large gifts, which not only fill our small vessels that we raise to Him to be filled, but overflow them till we are bowed to a sense of His wisdom and our folly. Every love, every sorrow opens our hearts to some love or sorrow in the hearts of others, or deep revelation about them, and this is might; everything resigned to Him gives added trust that He will rule all well, and this gives peace.

To M. H.

1864

I am working very hard at my sketching, and also at my copy of Bellini's Doge.[1]

To M. H.

It was very queer to meet Mr. Furnivall after all these years, and he is not the least changed. Just that seraph

[1] Now in the Ruskin Museum at Sheffield, by Octavia's bequest.

brow, and sweetly happy mouth, and the great dark eyes, and just that provoking, self-willed, arbitrary way of behaving.

To M. H.

June 13, 1864

Wilt thou be astonished to hear that Gertrude is going to be married to Charles Lewes, the step-son of the authoress of *Romola?* I have such faith in Gertrude's goodness as really to expect great happiness for her. It is all very wonderful. . . .

Last night Charles Lewes came to spend the evening with us. It was nice to see him with Gertrude, but what delighted me most was his desire to know and care for us all, his delight in coming, and the nice gentle way he cared to learn all about us. Mamma is so happy about the engagement. Gertrude was introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Lewes last Monday.

To M. H.

January 1, 1865

My call at The Priory[1] with Gertrude took place on Wednesday. We saw both Mr. and Mrs. Lewes, but I hardly spoke to Mr. Lewes, as Gertrude mainly talked to him. I am very glad that I went. Mrs. Lewes was very nice; a softened nature of great strength showed itself in all her words and looks. Best of all in her I liked a nervous intensity of expressive power in her hands, as she held mine for a second or two at parting. We spoke of Mme Bodichon.[2] It was a bond I know.

[1] The home of Mr. and Mrs. G. H. Lewes.

[2] A pioneer in education.

To M. H.

January 8, 1865

We went to Hampstead to meet Mr. and Mrs. Lewes. We plunged into great, wonderful, and beautiful subjects. They all love and reverence her, and I was afraid of usurping her, but naturally we came more together. Mr. Lewes was kindness itself. We had an argument about poetry; what it was; whether Thackeray possessed any. I quoted Ruskin and affirmed that if poetry be creative suggestion by the imagination of the noblest grounds for noble emotions, then Thackeray, at moments, shows it in calling out our pity. This led to a quiet talk between Mrs. Lewes and myself about Dickens, and much did I enjoy it. Then we got into talk about Dissenters and the hold they had on the poor; its ground and tendency. You will know that she told me much that was interesting. Then we talked of Nottingham Place and the work here. I asked her what kind of help she had meant I was to ask her for. She told me that if I saw something she could do with money, and I could ask her more easily than anyone else, she should be so happy to give it.

To M. H.

January 29, 1865

Ruskin's lecture was beyond all measure beautiful. It was like one grand prayer, song preaching from end to end. It was as if he would plead with us to work with our Father in mighty mercy to her children. Afterwards I had such a pressure of the hand from him, such consciousness of entire sympathy did it express.

To M. H.

March 5, 1865

MacDonald has really come to us, and never did I more rejoice in the success of a project. He is saying to our pupils all that I would have said to them, and so beautifully that he carried them all with him.

Octavia was anxious that our pupils should have the benefit of a course of literature lectures from George MacDonald.—E. S. M.

To M. H.

May 1865

MacDonald's lectures are indeed a success. He often nearly brings tears into my eyes by the beauty and truth and suddenness of what he says. What a strange charm that suddenness is! I do not quite understand it.

To M. H.

My visit to the MacDonalds was the happiest I have had. MacDonald was his very best, and she so sweet and thoughtful. We all sat round the fire and talked of such nice abstract principles. We discussed the modern habit of criticism—its irreverence and joylessness; remarked on its increase in the young, and its being, in the best of them, a mask of the reserve of better feeling. We considered it historically, as a reaction from a Byronic expressiveness much deficient in self-control—expression exceeding feeling. We also considered why this critical habit affected the reception of *spoken* less than *written* words. I thought that the reason was that sympathy came out more in the presence of the speaker.

To M. H.

May 1865

MacDonald delighted me much by all he said about Sir Philip Sydney's love of perfection and his intense desire to do even the smallest thing well. He read a letter of Sydney's to his brother, urging the importance of the choice of companions and friends, telling him to seek the great men, whose acquaintance may be obtained either by much expense or much humility. MacDonald remarked that the great and learned might be secured as teachers by much money, or by humility, such as to show them that we had the power of learning. It is only the humblest who can learn the greatest truths, and the great always have a longing to impart these truths and instinctively know who will learn them.

To M. H.

May 21, 1865

MacDonald said he would read us the loveliest poem first; that when we have seen the perfectly beautiful, if we have the right kind of eyes, it helps us to see all that is lovely in less beautiful things—so life in a lovely country develops the power of perceiving beauty; once get an eye of the right kind, and you are enabled to see beauty in every place.

To M. H.

June 5, 1865

We had such a beautiful lecture from MacDonald, and after it Miranda, Minnie and I returned with him and spent the evening. We went into the garden and sat there till the moon rose. He talked so beautifully, but

it was not so much what he said as the character of the man coming out in word, deed, and look, and the lovely home and children that delighted me. His entire trust is so beautiful. He came with us to the station and gave me his arm, but Minnie was carrying some roses, and instead of offering his arm he said 'You have the flowers to take care of you.' I wish I could read *Alec Forbes*[1] with thee. Thou wilt feel that MacDonald is right in believing that right action is always possible, and that love is the mightiest motive for it. I read his stories as allegories, and, as such, they are entirely true.

To M. H.

August 11, 1867

I went to visit the MacDonalds at Bude. The coach drive of twenty-four miles was delightful. Bideford was so lovely and the profusion of flowers glorious. There everyone was so kind, and there was such a sense of solitary freedom. The whole rocky coast and upland moor are so wild, my room is wholly my own, and I am expected to do exactly as I like.

Somehow the children are a source of perpetual delight, there is something soothing about them. Little Maurice with his large dark eyes, and long lashes, and his fair gold hair is my special joy; he runs up and puts his little hand in mine and prattles on to my continual delight; he says such lovely things. But all the children are sweet, and the household in many ways lovely. How many different forms of loveliness there are, as many for households as for people, I think, and each with its special liability to evil—God will perfect them all in

[1] One of George MacDonald's novels.

time, I suppose—each doing its separate work and all without a flaw.

My artistic self is much delighted here—the children's dresses are a perpetual joy, thou would be very shocked, and yet they are so lovely, just like the loveliest pictures. Fancy little Irene, with an Eastern complexion, large dark eyes, long lashes, and wavy dark hair, dressed in black with a red ribbon trimming, the ground red, with a pattern exactly like lace on it, the ribbon being in lovely lines about the frock—her hat is trimmed with bronze coloured purply-brown leaves, so that she might be a small Autumn fay.

I shall not forget the sweet thoughtful sympathy of everyone here. Last night MacDonald said, 'Now you must put all sad thoughts away, and take God's blessed gift of sleep. It is not often that we have the opportunity of sacrificing; we must not lose it; and when we offer up our cares and fears, we are offering not the best of the flock, but still He takes them all. We may cast our cares upon Him, for He cares for us.'

To M. H.

Undated

Last night we went to a regular old Cornish cottage, and, oh, what a contrast between the splendid old hospitable cottager, who bubbled over with merry talk about the things he loved and about which he expected you to care for every bit as much, and the polished Mr. T., brother of Lord T., Rector, slim, young, dark, refined, lisping, elegant, and so perfectly smooth that you could find neither crevice nor peak in his character, though, of course, they may have been there.

To M. H.

June 25, 1865

Mr. Maurice gave such a beautiful sermon to-day on God's education of us. It filled me with humbleness, and with all hope.

Mr. Durrant has been with us for some days. He is so nice, and it is such a pleasure to be able to entertain friends here. I think sometimes of the old days, when we had neither space nor power, and wonder how I bore the pain. And now that God has enriched us, we seem to do so little, and yet it is such a joy to do it. Looking over old letters I came on one to Minnie, in which I said: 'I am not afraid. I feel somehow we shall not be out of work.' How strange the words sound now, but then how consciously we lived from day to day by God's mercy and help.

To M. H.

June 25, 1865

B. is dead. I went to see his sister Eliza at once. There was something specially sad in the death because the life had been so incomplete.

These incompleted lives do they not speak more plainly than any others of an after-life, of some opportunity given of a better one? And there he lay ennobled wonderfully in death, almost a man's face, and the features quite refined in the whiteness and clear cutting about them, so quiet; and all my thoughts of reproach so mingled with those of how he had probably lived more up to what he had been taught than I had; and also with those of how now he saw much that is dark to me. And then I thought of this wonderful family life, and

how it makes each person prized, not for what they are worth in beauty of character, or strength of mind, but more like God's reason simply for their relationship, as He loves us through all things, because we are His children. As I walked home I met eleven vans of school-children going into the country shouting with wild glee. First it was an awful contrast to the hushed house, but then again I knew that they fulfilled God's will in their joy, as he did in entering the new life that is prepared for him, as poor Eliza did, who worked, loved, and suffered, and she will see God's face nearer than the children will in the hayfields.

To M. H.

14 Nottingham Place
July 16, 1865

Poor Miss S. arrived yesterday with a guinea. She must join MacDonald's lectures. She would not think of accepting my invitation. She'd been reading *Alec Forbes*, she didn't think the Bible directly contradicted him, she would wish to believe with him that 'all would be brought to Christ.' As it was, she never could be anything but half-sorrowful and half-joyful in this life, she thought she could not even in the next unless she were much changed for the better.

I went to visit Miss S. to help in finding work for a poor, miserable, vulgar woman, whom she had taken in, giving up her own bed to her, and who would not take any work that was offered. I was interested in the contrast between the would-be-grand and the real grand, the person who could afford to be a burden, and the person who had something to share with another. The dependent was round-faced, self-asserting, dressed in

silk, with large crinoline; nothing was good enough for her, and she kept Miss S. waiting. Miss S. was tall, thin, shabby, her dress fell quite straight, her bonnet was black and lank, but her large grey eyes looked out of a kind, thoughtful face, which lighted up at every fresh thought that crossed her mind, and her gentle words were powerful and quiet, coming after a long harangue of Miss X. So I was interested to go to see her, and more so when I saw her unpretending little room in a lodging-house, her few carefully tended plants, her statuettes and pictures of Garibaldi, her collecting-box for the Freedman's Aid, her books and other pictures, and saw her among them quiet and happy, and noticed her really reverent study of her beloved authors, Mrs. Browning, Ruskin, MacDonald, whose words she had pondered on and applied and knew by heart; such a refreshing, touching evening I have not had for many a long day.

To M. H.

GODMANCHESTER
September 3, 1865

It is quiet here as if it would hush my soul into stillest repose and compensate for much rush and bustle, preparing me to bear more bravely and in hope; only the bees and now and then the full-toned clear church bells break the silence. God be thanked for silence, I say fervently. Last night we sat in the island under wide-spreading trees, the grass exquisitely green at our feet, the water quietly floating on its way, catching every colour of the evening sky, down which the sun was sinking, lighting it as it went down with purple, crimson and gold. I love old Mrs. Baumgarten deeply, and delight

to see her fresh deep love and sympathy with all the world, specially her many beloved children and grandchildren, and to hear her talk of the old memories of her own childhood and ancestral seat, to learn something of what that deep attachment is to an inherited spot of this old earth, rich with memories of days long ago, and people long dead, and I wonder silently at the death of all this feeling in this change-loving age, quite marvelling to hear that her son has sold the old property.

I enclose Mamma's letter from Switzerland. The very strongest and deepest joy I have is thankfulness that she is indeed there and gathering memories to be a possession in after-years. A girl may be thankful indeed to live in some way to gladden such a life as Mamma's.

To M. H.

September 3, 1863

Thou ask about our portraits. Mamma says we are Past, Present, and Future.

Miranda is looking into the past, Gertrude is just living in the light and warmth of loving and being loved. I am looking back at the stories of my life, and saying half triumphantly: 'Do you think you can hinder me?' Minnie is just looking for the next thing she can do, and Florence is looking almost awed into the future.

To M. H.

October 1865

Mr. Maurice returned on Thursday, and I wrote to ask him to come to see me for a few minutes' private conversation. Of course, like an angel of help as he is, he came on Friday evening. I told him our difficulty; he spoke so nobly, like his own great self, without one

single quoted or adopted conventionality. I hardly knew that on such subjects he was so free from conventional notions. He spoke so tenderly, as if he cared for us all, so trustfully, as if he knew that we could not be hurt.

To M. H.

December 10, 1865

I have had so bright and pleasant a visit to Offley, and have returned with quite wonderful vigour and mirth. Mr. and Mrs. Tom Hughes were kindness itself, and, as they were alone, I saw a very great deal of them. Mr. Hughes is really quite charming, that deep, true, undercurrent of earnest faith running perpetually under his beaming sympathy and bright fun are simply delightful. I had many a long interesting talk with him about the future of the working classes, about the new 'Broad Church' books, about the end of the world in Mayfair and elsewhere; how one's life might be such that at any moment we could lay it down in peace, giving up our weapons and leaving the fight and the perfecting of ourselves and the world to Him who could accomplish it, accepting salvation as a free gift; from that we got on to legitimate love of places and things, love of them which would for a time even make us regret to change them for better, which he thought closely allied to love of possession, and he argued that the things that we did well to love were the common things shared with all men, sunlight, air, and the beauty of the earth. When it grew dark he read *Pickwick* aloud till the children went to bed. This is a memory of him I think I shall long retain, for all that is ugly in parts of Dickens seemed by the touch of that bright spirit either unheard or purified;

all Pickwick's beautiful guilelessness was brought out with a sympathy that was simply angelic. I never saw a deeper instance of refining power, and the fun was preserved, and entered into with simple, hearty glee. I feel as if I had been living with a kind of child-angel endued with a man's earnestness, knowledge, and strength.

To M. H.

January 1866

To-day I dined with Watts.[1] He is transparently, deeply good, a quiet, sympathetic man, with large childlike heart. The house is perfectly lovely. Imagine a low wainscoted room with frescoes on old gold background, and large flowering shrubs looking in at the window, and the soft twilight stealing in as we sat talking. There is nothing pathetic about Watts, as there is about Ruskin. Watts is a more self-contained man, I think, but with deep and tender sensibilities, and I gather faith with which he is better satisfied. You will think it odd that I should compare these two men, but, besides the contrast, he was my host, and one sees a great deal of a man so. He had evidently taken deeply to heart all my work, about which I told him, and he begged me most kindly to go again. He said that if the children from the playground go to Lady Airley's, he will go too.

To M. H.

January 14, 1866

Minnie and I have heard such a beautiful sermon from a clergyman whose church is in Bethnal Green. It was very simple, just the story of his district. It measures only

[1] G. F. Watts, the artist.

four hundred yards from North to South, and about the same from East to West, and there is a population of 13,500 of the very lowest class, dock labourers, dog-fanciers, costermongers, pickpockets, etc. Typhus fever broke out in 1862, and he has never been absent from the district since. The first case was of a man living with 7 other people in a room 10 ft. by 8 ft. When this clergyman went to him he was lying on rags partly dressed, but with no bedclothes at all, and quite unconscious; with his head he had knocked off about a foot of plaster from the wall. The fever spread and emptied that house, and stole on and on, from street to street, attacked every one of the staff of workers and killed one curate. The clergyman said that the most desperate characters could be touched, if you took them the right way. To illustrate this he told this anecdote. A winter ago, one of the most desperately bad men in the district came to him to ask for a letter of recommendation to a magistrate, in order to get help from the poor-box. He told the man that he could not recommend him, he knew he could not; the man agreed. 'But,' said the clergyman, 'I will write a letter, but I must tell him the truth. So I wrote and said that I knew the man, knew him *well* as a very bad one, and that he had but one claim, and that was that he was starving. I said that, under the circumstances, I should have relieved him myself if I could; and so I recommended him to the magistrate. Then I read the letter to the man and said: "You know it is all true." "Yes it is, Sir." Laying my hand on his shoulder, I said, "But why should it be true? you know what is right as well as I do. You know the way to do right?" The man seemed quite touched. "Yes, I do," he said, "I'm not so ignorant as many think

me. I had a mother once——," then he could go no further, but ran out of the house.' He also told us of a dog-fancier and stealer, who learnt to live better, I conclude. This man had a little white dog of very pure breed which he loved much and couldn't bear to sell, and yet he felt the temptation to sin and he drew round him men who led him wrong. At last he sent his wife with the dog to ask the clergyman to keep him, saying that he could then know the dog was taken care of, and could see it from time to time, and have the pleasure of washing it. The clergyman told us how sure he was that the way to raise people was to get them to *give*; how he had begun to ask the little children in his schools; but the greatest opponents were the teachers, who thought it cruel, but he persevered. Many people would be called converts, but he liked better to think of them as being recalled to their true state. Many had become communicants, and better still, honest and Christian in their lives.

To M. H.

February 11, 1866

My pity and sympathy were always with Martha, and I have felt it hard to believe that hers was not the better part, if she had learnt to worship while she worked. At any rate Martha's part must be mine, so I must see what can be made of it. Certainly the resolution to make pauses for quiet thought is a most difficult duty. I believe the difficulty is connected with pride and want of faith. Attention to details is blessed if it springs from simple obedience; but restlessness and anxiety arise from a lingering doubt whether God can really arrange His world without our help.

To M. H.

February 26, 1866

Sometimes among the crowd of small cares and worries here I feel the old fear that they may make me small and mean; Ruskin speaks in *The Two Paths* about the deteriorating influence of multitudes of small cares. He only speaks of them in allusion to artists, but they have a very great influence on all men. Of course, I believe that neither angels nor principalities nor powers can separate us from the love of God, neither can small annoyances or intercourse with people of low standards of morality. But, were it possible, I suppose one would unhesitatingly choose self-deterioration for the sake of raising others. I suppose such experience throws light on the words, 'He who will lose his life shall save it.' But the salvation is entirely invisible at times.

To M. H.

November 5, 1866

On Friday, Princess Alice sent for me. We spoke much of work among the poor, and I could see, from little stories that came out, how earnestly she has tried to get near them, and how the paraphernalia of her position has again and again thrown her back. It was touching. However, to-morrow she goes with me alone and quite unknown, right down face to face with the people in B Court. Is it not strange? It is a profound secret, partly lest a crowd should gather, and the arrangements as to coachman, private doors, entering one place and escaping by another make me feel as if in a novel I was stealing a princess. Seriously, her eager appeal to me to take her,

and let her see it all just as it is, without anyone knowing, was touching.

She has a great admiration for *Robert Falconer*, and wants to see MacDonald; said it was so refreshing to find a clever man who believed.

She was so simple and sweet. I dare say I did hosts of incorrect things, but it didn't seem to matter. I thought it was best to be quite natural—or the only kind of excellence I could achieve—and we sat and chatted.

To M. H.

January 6, 1867

What oddly different people I do come across. Think of coming from such courts as mine to such a dinner-party. There was a captain, such a queer man with unconcealed confidence in his own power and success, a kind of Tom Thurnall, if Tom Thurnall[1] had been a member of an old family, proud and yet scornful of its history. I dare say some of his self-confidence is due to family pride. Somehow I seemed to see vistas opening before me into worlds that I had never really believed in. How vividly sometimes things one has heard but never realized flash into life. First the man talked such intolerable complimentary stuff, and hardly more interesting boast of his own performances. And then suddenly he became serious and interesting. He defined a woman's duties, with which I did not care to quarrel, but threw out half scornful suggestions as to her gentleness and amiability, etc. He patronizingly enumerated little offices she might fulfil if she could find suitable objects. 'Oh, certainly,' I said, 'if the real, solemn, large business

[1] Kingsley's *Two Years Ago*.

of life does not demand too much of her thought and strength.' 'What should I point out or suggest?' 'Oh, nothing certainly for other people, but to keep their eyes open, and do bravely what they saw was wanted. I knew nothing of other people's duties, only I thought, God having made them, He had meant them to be of some use at all times of their life.' 'Then if I wouldn't tell him about other people's work would I tell him about my own. I had spoken of the homes of the poor. Had I a district? because he supposed there was work to be done if people knew how to do it.' So I told him a little about the houses, rather ashamed of having got so deep as to talk of personal work. He had found fault with women's speaking in public, and I told him that 'I thought he would not at all approve of my work, for certainly there was much in the business and in the stern determination required, which might really make a woman mean, ungenerous, and hard, but if the work is at all worth doing we must fairly estimate and bravely meet the risk.' He broke in with, 'Oh, if a deed is done from duty, of course, I have had to put my brother officers under arrest; it has been very hard but we can't help that.' But what perhaps pleased me most was before that, when I smiled at his notion of daily toil being unbearable, he seemed startled to his better self, and after all his self-contented boasting he suddenly turned and looked hard at me, and asked if I should guess his had been all plain sailing, or if he had had things to bear and difficulties to overcome. The captain had been rattling on about the delicious taste of wild duck, his little place, a name not unknown in Bristol, etc., that, if he hadn't asked, I should have thought it *had* been all plain sailing.

I said I did not think he had been through what *I* should call difficulty, or how could I tell, only if he had, did not he find one of the best possessions of his life to have had the experience. 'Yes, certainly,' he replied. It was a queer talk altogether.

To M. H.

FLORENCE
October 29, 1867

Somehow the heroic figure of the single honest, earnest man of Italy[1] looms large and grand out of the mist of intrigue, and the small desires and low motives of the practical people here. The talk about patriotism, etc., is very fiery. You cannot tell how one is impressed by the spiritual greatness of Garibaldi, nor the way in which his character tells. Every one seems to know that he is wholly above corruption, change, or deceit. His word is implicitly trusted; his steadfastness entirely relied on. If he is impatient one knows it is with the noble intolerance of wrong, that can count no cost worthy to be weighed against any perfect good.

After writing this we went out to make use of some letters of introduction. First we went to Dolfi, a celebrated Garibaldian, a baker, a great friend of Garibaldi's. I shall never forget that man. The news had not long arrived that the French fleet had really sailed, and that that splendid Garibaldi had won two battles, approached close to Rome, but entirely unsupported, not having even arms or ammunition sent to him; and when the King receives the news from France, the only order he gives is for the troops to surround his own palace, lest

[1] Garibaldi.

there should be a demonstration. So all Florence hopes on, from hour to hour, and no other thing does the King do. Fancy now Dolfi, the baker, with keen, clear, determined eyes, and a mouth almost tremulous with emotion, a man with royal intellect and royal heart, and thoughts of his friend far away there, deceived into action, and then forsaken, and you have a picture that will remain memorable. Perhaps one thing that struck me most was that he took so much pains about our small affairs, though I fancy he had many things on hand, and certainly his heart was not in Florence, and his eyes had a far-away look, while he was so kind and self-controlled. I could not help feeling as if *we*, who had done nothing for Italy, had no right to be entering into the heritage of this accumulated intensity of feeling.

We went on to Signor Rosselli and his English wife, both great Liberals, but not such people as Dolfi. We had another letter to a doctor. 'Left Florence,' said everyone, 'Oh, surely with Garibaldi!' Rosselli told us of four brothers, two killed, one lies wounded. Their mother sent them one after the other to fight for their country. This is the kind of spirit with which the work is done. Assuming that it would have been wiser to wait, yet to talk of Garibaldi as 'the evil genius' of Italy! As if such a life were not the seed of grain somewhat greater than the exportation of gold into the Country! I feel inclined to say, 'Though he lost half your country to France, and killed your bravest in doing it, there must be eternal gain to you from his existence, if you have any power of growth.'

To M. H.

14 Nottingham Place

Our pupils saw Garibaldi. I was very glad they did. As he passed, something at our window attracted him and he looked up, a full, bright sympathetic look of intelligence. One could believe that in one glance he had received some impression to be remembered. One saw the power and the heart of the man at once. He looked ill, was nearly lying down in the carriage, had his hat on, which hid part of his magnificent forehead. He drove slowly, and the enthusiasm must have been immense to attract such a crowd; but whether they cheered or were silent, or what anyone did or thought, in a breathless minute, while he passed, I knew literally nothing at all. I felt afterwards that I had been one of a mighty body of people, but at the moment one really felt alone with him; a great surging mass below becoming a mere background unnoticed though seen.

To M. H.

As to pleasure, I have had much. I met Seeley.[1] He came straight across the room to me, placed a chair and sat down, and talked nearly all the evening; such nice talk about education, a noble view of it; how prizes interfered with it; how Cambridge was weighted with money; how he had been educated in a school presided over by aldermen, whose measure of success was money. He had lived with ordinary people, and many of the alterations which seem to me simply necessary and natural, seem to him probably right, but involving enormous

[1] Professor Seeley, author of *Ecce Homo*.

change. He draws one out, rather than giving himself out, like many shy and sympathetic people; but there is a quiet lighting up of the eye with full satisfaction, a sort of earnest forward look, which shows how much he feels. It is in some ways a sad face, but full of feeling and thought. I am most glad to have met him this second time; henceforward I feel that I know him.

Octavia was visiting Arthur Hill, her half-brother, whom she had not seen since she was a child.—E. S. M.

To M. H.

READING
1868

It is very strange here. I feel so very near and yet so far off. They are all kindness and hospitality itself, and in many ways the household is such a nice one to see. I am very much interested in the seven little nephews and nieces. It is curious to see the Hill nature in them, and to see what it becomes under training and circumstances to me quite new. Arthur does everything to perfection, and sees to all details amusingly. The children have much go in them, such abounding energy, intellect and will. Margy says that they are very affectionate. I dare say they are, but they are not caressing children, nor fond of animals. I was Godmother to the little Constance Ida, who was christened to-day. The complete home-life is very lovely, not rare, thank God, but strange to me; the children's confidence in their father's love and strength, his joy in helping and planning and working for them, brings tears into my eyes—he is evidently so rich in the feeling of each separate thing that he can do for them, and so delighted with their growing proficiency,

he feels gladness in his strength. I love him and them all and hope I may often return and watch and teach the young things, and so know them that if ever I could help them I may be ready.

To M. H.

November 12, 1868

I went to hear John Stuart Mill.[1] It was very interesting. The other candidate, Captain G., is a handsome (so-called), empty-headed puppy, I should think, with just that dash of momentary mettle one sees latent, very latent usually, in high-born people; but as to brains and heart, I should think he has none. It was therefore very queer to hear first his answers and then Mills's to the questions put to them. The one so flippant, empty, conventional and meagre, the other so keenly clear, definite, and far-reaching. Compulsory Education, Disestablishment of the English Church, Separation of Married People in workhouses, the right of landlords over tenants, all were dealt with so distinctly. You know that Mill would never win my heart, but he is decidedly an able man, and I liked watching him, as one would a finely contrived machine.

The third candidate was Smith, and a working man said: 'I'll tell you about all the candidates: Mr. Mill is a gentleman as writes books; Mr. Smith is a gentleman as sells books; and Captain G., well, he's a gentleman as doesn't read books.' —E. S. M.

[1] John Stuart Mill was then standing for Westminster.

To M. H.

April 18, 1869

I have been collecting money to help a paralysed old lady, and I had a touching interview with Mrs. Rundle Charles[1] about it. I knew she was moving, but went thinking that the urgency of the matter justified it. I followed her to her new house; she was unpacking for the first time the books and treasures from the old home; what memories must have been in them. Never shall I forget her heartfelt sympathy; no one had taken it so to heart. She came with me to the door and there fairly broke down; her self-control all gone. She sobbed and said, thanking me for coming: 'Oh, it may be this house may be a place of help,' then almost incoherently, as if the thought of who had always been with her in plans of help was too much, she said with a tone imploring for confirmation, 'And they do not help less there than here?' I said: 'Oh, far more.' 'And they're not far off —not far off from us down here?' 'No,' I answered, 'assuredly even nearer.' I shall always remember her by that day.

To M. H.

May 2, 1869

We have just had a grand sermon from Mr. Maurice. He spoke of the Communion and of the people who wish to believe in the 'Real Presence,' of their dissatisfaction with mere remembrance. Of his sympathy with them in this, of his being sure that the Presence must be *real*, that memory of past things of an absent Saviour must be unsatisfying. But there is such a thing as forgetfulness

[1] Authoress of *Schönberg Cotta Family*.

of a present person, and a sense of separation from those who are near. It is *this* which our Communion would do away with, because it is this which Christ Himself would destroy here and everywhere. If this certainty of His being among us were given, we should find Him in all our streets, and should not despair; in all our country walks everything would bear witness of Him. There is a natural longing for 'the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still,' but the spirit of man is far too great a thing for us to feel separation because these are absent, for we have been made one with Him by our love.

To M. H.

July 1869

I have been reading the *Countess of Rudolstadt*, by George Sand. I have not half finished it. I am glad I left so long a pause between the two books. I like Albert to die, and the impression that Consuelo could never love twice, though the first love had been a dream and a mistake. Still the second book is interesting, and it is probably right. I cannot tell why one has this sense of the beauty of a nature that can love but once, if it is not that one believes there was some germ of truth in the imagination on which the love was based, which shall develop in the life to come. I mean that the Anzoletos of life shall grow to be the Anzoletos as they were imagined by those who loved them. If the whole feeling is killed by disappointment, and merely leaves a withered soul, capable of blessing, of labour, of music, but not of love and joy like Consuelo's, I cannot but think that death may make so utter a pause that the nature might blossom again to new love—and if death can, then perhaps it is not so

impossible but that years and life might make nearly as much. Clearly, this is the authoress's meaning. It is not simply that Consuelo loves what is out of reach, as low natures do, it is that the glory of Albert's nature grows upon her, the measure of his stature impresses her more justly—the many low, small creatures she sees make her feel what that man was. She has passed through so much, all the world has been so dead to her with the passing of Anzoleto's love and the dream of what he was. But no child of God's is meant for eternal death in this deepest sense; a child must either live in hope of the resurrection of the first love, or the new birth of the true. All finally depends on the question which is the true, which two natures were intended for one another. One honours most those who never make a mistake about this, who, err as they may about the point a soul has reached, see from the first what a soul is intended to be, and love that unalterably. I think from the first one feels that Consuelo has, more than most people, loved a shadow. I do think it is more faithfulness of attachment than any inspiration of perception which keeps her to Anzoleto for a day. I think Albert and she were meant for one another, so the second book doesn't jar on me so much as it might. I shall know better when I have finished it.

To M. H.

July 17, 1869

How I should like to introduce you to some of my newer friends, Miss Rowland[1] with her high aspirations and child-like reverence and energy; stately Mrs. Duckworth, magnificent in all she does, but strangely reverent

[1] Dame Henrietta Barnett.

and beautifully simple, of whom I seem to know so much 'spiritually,' so little in fact. C. G., who I know would give you a feeling of dissatisfaction from having just missed being *great*; he is a wholly good man. Mrs. Browning says: 'Just a good man made a proud man,' but in her sense that one touch of pride, pride of the kind she means, proves incapacity of greater sight, ignorance of larger standards of weight and measure. Flo said, *apropos* of some worldly people, 'What a peeling off there will be when some people die.' Well, one feels that there will have to be just a little peeling off when he dies. But then how great he will be, his sunny, tender sympathy, his child-heart, his tender pity, his quick glance, his universal courtesy of manner and his transparent purity!

To M. H.

July 19, 1869

It is the loveliest of days, everything is in full force and go, and it seems curious to think how soon a sudden pause and hush will come over the world here, the shops and exhibitions emptied, the great houses shut up, and only the monotonous life of the poor goes on unbroken. One goes on with everything as if it were to last for ever, and then one does best, but I think these pauses and breaks are so helpful, if they come as a sudden respite from work, but are harmful if one keeps thinking that it is not worth while to begin this or that because of them.

To M. H.

July 11, 1869

I wish I could plan my life better, and again I have asked for grace not to plan it, but to do the next duty

simply; but I had hoped, do hope so earnestly, for a small sphere and concentrated power, and everything seems to be leading me out and on, new friends, new work, new subjects of thought, etc. But if one has Maurice and Ruskin in one's youth, one ought surely to share the light they gave. Mind, the people whom I see are better than I am, but there is a kind of fitful popularity which is not the best atmosphere in which to live, and London is such a hurrying place.

But my people, oh, my people, how I love them more and more, and how well all seems to be going with them.

The following letter from Rev. F. D. Maurice was an answer to one from Octavia expressing her fears about the 'perils of success.'—E. S. M.

From F. D. Maurice *to* Octavia

3, St. Peter's Terrace, Cambridge
November 16, 1869

My Dear Friend,

Thank you very much for all your kind thoughts of me. If I have told you anything that has done you good, it has been something that has been brought home to me through my own necessities. Specially, and more than any could dream of, has my vanity needed humiliations which I could never have invented for myself, and which must I am sure be renewed continually, if they are to work any good result. On the whole the greatest comfort I can find, though I have learnt the art most imperfectly, is in St. Paul's words that we may put off the old man every day and put on the new. That is to say not a new man that we have worked out for

ourselves from the material of our own selfishness, but the true Man, the Son of Man, in whom is no selfishness, who is the Head of us all, who leads us to His Father and our Father. The simple trust in Him one comes back to as the deepest and most practical wisdom, and the sure, distinct words which express it as more comprehensive, as well as more appropriate to our personal difficulties than all others. I do not wonder that you feel the perils of success. Still resolve to be thankful for it all; so it will no longer cleave to you as if it belonged to you, but will help to lift you out of yourself to give you the higher hopes, and the wider range of sympathies, which you have a right to claim as a Member of Christ.

Ever yours affectionately,

F. D. MAURICE

To M. H.

February 23, 1873

How strangely in life one seems often to decide to open some terrible vista of difficulty or pain, hereafter never to be closed up, perhaps by all effort on this earth, or at best lasting for years; and now one little act would keep it closed always. That imperative '*must*' spoken so clearly in one's ear, which the world would never know of, where does it derive its stupendous force?

Why is the soul accustomed to obey that voice of duty? Why are its commands so clear, coming in the hushed hours? Why does self-indulgence, why does love of peace never gain the victory? The 'ought' should suggest allegiance, that which is *owed*, and surely to some one; else to the trained soul *must* would hardly be imperative. I remember reading, since his death, a letter

of Mr. Maurice's in which he says that he has just finished the Theological Essays, and foresees distinctly all the pain which will follow. How often, in a small way, one has gazed down a vista of probable pain. *That one* long gaze is essential to the heroism of the struggle; perhaps, too, *it* and it alone could nerve the man in the future time, when the noise of men is round him, either to see clearly, or to bear manfully. But how often the amount of pain is wrongly estimated. Sometimes the adversary never sees the gauntlet; sometimes its agonies are greater than one had ever dreamed of. But the wrestling of the soul with foreseen pain is ever helpful.

To M. H.

BRISTOL
October 3, 1869

My paper on 'Gifts' was to come off. The whole room was crowded. A clergyman told me that we must adjourn to the Bristol Library, some ten minutes' walk from there. I started with a few friends, and the audience came streaming behind. I never saw anything so absurd. Canon Norris took the chair. The room was filled with people, such a sea of faces! I wasn't the least nervous, but was uncertain how to measure the distance my voice would travel. I understand it was easily audible. My paper was a great success, and I was amazed to find the intense interest that it excited. Then Canon Norris asked me to tell about the houses, and several capital questions were asked, to which I replied. Never was anything simpler or easier, but the amount of feeling it took out of me was considerable. I think my pleasantest

impressions of it are the extreme kindness of the two gentlemen presiding, and the eager, lovely faces of the earnest questioners crowding round to ask private questions after it was over. I am more and more impressed with the work opening before me. Canon Girdlestone is the man of most heart here. Such a worn, clear, kind, sensitive type of head and face, with such fire and such intellect. Hast thou read of his efforts for the agricultural labourers?

To M. H.

Undated

I had a glorious talk with Mr. Barnett[1] about the attachment to places and things, and of the growing love of change, whether the indifference to particular things had any compensating beauties, whether it betokened a larger sense of having things in common for all men's use. Then we talked of the other temper, or the unconscious association of ideas with things, how thus a man, who lived a great pure life, might make the whole world of things about him harmonious and precious, because he had done well, and felt nobly among them. He preached so beautifully to-day on the text: 'The hour cometh when ye shall be scattered, and shall leave me alone, and yet I am not alone because the Father is with me.' He spoke of the dread of deathly loneliness, how we were day by day, as it were, on a plain among pleasant people: on one side stretched a lonely desert haunted by terrors, on the other lofty mountain peaks, which, though they were unpeopled,

[1] Samuel Barnett, founder of Toynbee Hall, Canon of Westminster.

towered up into the sky, and where we longed to be alone with God. He spoke of the mistake of those who left men with the idea of entering into nearer communion with God; that only as we lived among them could we learn the true beauties of their various natures, and that slowly, year by year, as we gathered these fragments of glory, the old notion of corrupt humanity would vanish, and we should see gradually that these fragments made up the mighty humanity which was Christ Himself.

To M. H.

July 17, 1870

I don't think the week has been quite as excitingly full as usual, and yet I have been quite as tired.

Monday I had the rents, and then the Council, and in the evening read to the children.

Tuesday is always very full; it is my day for being amongst the Walmer Place people, and up at Freshwater Place, then there are two long Committees; and, this week, I had to tear across to Hammersmith to arrange for the tenants going there, and to rush back only just in time to receive Miss Trevelyan, who spent the evening here; talking with her was quiet and bright.

Wednesday I had a great deal of teaching, then a quantity of business, which nearly drove me frantic; then to go out to see several members of the Committee on business; then out to dinner to meet a gentleman anxious to set to work among the poor.

Thursday I had to walk over the Park to see the lady who has helped with the Walmer Place accounts, and to close them for the half year. We had three hours' work.

Then I walked on to Hampstead, painted all day; and all the evening till ten, I was at work there making a lay figure.

Friday I painted all the morning, distracted with business, and dictating for three hours while I painted. Then I went to the Committee at Walmer Place, back just in time to give a class. Then Lady Stanley came to settle about her contribution for the building. Then an American, who was the originator of the Organization of Charity in Edinburgh, came. Then, in the middle of dinner, Mrs. Hunt to fix about her daughter coming to assist me—before she had gone, Miss L. came for two hours' work at the W.P. accounts; then Mamma and I began the week's accounts, which we finished a little before 1 a.m.

Saturday I taught till 11, then painted till 1 o'clock, dictating to two people at the same time; then a hurried lunch, seeing a gentleman and dressing, and by 2 I was driving off to the MacDonalds' in a van with the tenants. We had, however, the very easiest afternoon compared with what I had expected, for Mr. Strahan[1] had hired a steamer entirely for our own people, and the delight of watching kept them quite amused and good the whole time. However, a series of accidents, or rather want of forethought, made us so late that we did not reach home till past 12 at night! The tenants, to my intense relief, we managed to get home rather earlier. It was a perfect expedition, and except for a little anxious responsibility on the part of the leaders, which they would not allow to cloud their enjoyment, there was no harm in being late. It was so lovely and calm and bright. It will be a day to remember for long.

[1] The publisher.

To M. H.

Is there not a strange binding up of first and last in life, which gives one a sense of government in it? not of warning, not of chance, but of distinct plan, as when in a noble book the beginning explains the end, and the end gathers up the beginning. . . . I never saw much in the proverb, 'Keep true to the dream of your youth,' till I knew how Miranda loved it. There is a certain height of noble passionate enthusiasm, a grasp of a grand ideal, a faith in the possibility of even here attaining to it, which ought to accompany us through life, like a scale at the side of a picture by which we may measure things later on. Such a scale is of use to us at all times of crisis. It is not *then* we must form our standards, it is *then* we must cling to them. So far the proverb is right. Only the dream of age should be nobler than the dream of youth, and Browning is right when again and again he dwells on this. The dear old Pope, in the *Ring and the Book*, sees that the fires *more and more* visit a soul in passage to the sky.

If so we live, that life is a passage to the sky, the later life will be the greater; and it is the prodigal, and all (in so far as we *are* prodigals) to whom memory is better than hope, or is the ground of hope.

The letter opposite was written from Edinburgh, November 21, 1902.

Everyone is very kind, & it has been very interesting to see their work. Specially has it been a new idea to me that the places they have in charge sh^d be so beautiful, they are in the main the real old houses magnificently built, in grand situations & most picturesque, they must have been most difficult to improve, but all that is essential to wealth & comfort seems to be secured with watchful ingenuity of the ladies who manage. They enjoy the quaint beauty of turret & gable, outside staircase & stone girt window, but their real object in keeping & adapting these old houses is that thus only can they provide rooms at the rents the occupants have

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Yours, Your loving daughter
Octavia Hill

PART II

RUSKIN

INTRODUCTION

THE following pages give some idea of the beautiful and unique friendship between Octavia and Ruskin, which, beginning when she was only between sixteen and seventeen years of age, ripened gradually, as she matured, with a deeper communion of thought.

At a later date Ruskin, recognizing Octavia's longing to help, her great sympathy, and remarkable practical ability, enabled her to realize one of her early ideals by generously purchasing tenement cottages, which he placed entirely under her management and control.

At the early age of twelve Octavia had read much of the first volume of *Modern Painters*, and knew long passages by heart. She met him first when he visited the Ladies' Guild[1] in Russell Place, to see the art work, where Octavia was employed in painting on glass. On the breaking up of the Ladies' Guild, Ruskin offered to continue her art training, and asked her to send him a design of her own, and set her to work at illuminating, and later on at copying in the Galleries.

[1] See *Life and Letters of Octavia Hill.*

From JOHN RUSKIN *to* OCTAVIA HILL

DEAR MISS HILL,

I like the designs very much as far as they go, but it is utterly impossible for me to say if I *shall* like them when coloured, as the colour in a coloured work is the root of the matter, and I have no imagination and cannot follow you into your wealth of clouds, till you develop them practically. I send this line to put your mind at rest, for I see you have been taking tormenting pains about these things, both of you, your friend a little too much pains, her design is a little too rich. These designs are better than any I saw at the Ladies' Guild. If you and Miss Cons[1] could manage, when the weather gets mild again, to pay a little visit to my MSS. here, they would feel themselves, as far as age and parchment admit of feeling, very much honoured, and I think they and I together might give you some useful hints.

Thank Mrs. Hill for her obliging letter.

From J. R.

April 13, 1855

DEAR MISS HILL,

I may roughly answer your main question. The reason we have no life is that instead of seeking for new *ideas* we are always seeking for new *languages*, and instead of composing new music, trying to find out new *notes*. There are seven notes A, B, C, D, E, F, and

[1] A worker in the Ladies' Guild, afterwards Octavia's right-hand in social reform. Later on she initiated temperance and housing work in Southwark.

G, and there will be to all time. Ginger will assuredly be always hot in the mouth, and blue, purple and scarlet always the best colours that human creatures can use to ornament with.

You shall invent as much as you like—but you must not try to find out new laws of nature, nor to speak with anything but your tongue, nor look with anything but your eyes.

Old Words, Old Colours, Old Faiths, New Thoughts.

Truly yours,

J. Ruskin

From J. R.

October 20, 1855

Dear Miss Hill,

I will do what I can. I hope I *can* be of use, more in a little while than now, for I have been thinking much of the Ladies' Guild,[1] but must get my main work off my hands before I can think properly. I *hate shares*, and abhor anything in that form to the uttermost. I can only help you by taking work, or subscribing. That I will do, but at present I would rather take work, because I don't want my name to be connected with too many *new* plans at once; it weakens my influence.

I am sadly puzzled how to teach girls. I don't understand them, nor what is best for them, they are such odd creatures. I am thinking about it, and hope with Mr. Maurice's help to organize something. If I do not, I will at all events help your friend with her work.

You were quite right about the picture. It is the fight of Michael with Satan for the body of Moses. It was the

[1] See *Life and Letters of Octavia Hill.*

Michael that impressed you so. It is by Watts, a mere sketch, but very good.

From J. R.

October 1855

DEAR MISS HILL,

I was very much interested by your letter; and shall always be happy to be of use to you, and to tell you anything I can, but I thought you knew that *before* you were introduced to the Michael. In the meantime go on with your own design for me. What has become of that?

As to the Turners, you can see mine whenever you like, any afternoon after one and before 4. But I cannot answer for being at home myself, but you can bring anybody with you whom you like.

Faithfully yours,

J. RUSKIN

From J. R.

March 6, 1856

DEAR MISS HILL,

I think you have been very *quick* if you have really already made anything like a copy of those things —with toothache, too, a judgment on you for despising *bodily* pain. No person in a right state of mind ought ever to suffer much from any other, but 'rejoice evermore.' Look at the great typical parable about Lazarus and Dives. Lazarus had no *heartache* that I know of. It was the bodily distress that was the 'Evil thing' to him.—Suspense is disagreeable I own, as well as toothache, but if you expect to know how much a year

either of you can make, or whether or no you have a brilliant genius, in three days or even three months' trial, you will be disappointed.

Most truly yours,
J. RUSKIN

OCTAVIA *to* M. H.

October 11, 1856

I saw so much more of Ruskin yesterday than I have ever done before. He had written to me from abroad that he had 'gone into rest.' He said he was not well, but better. Then I said, 'I would play cricket.' He looked astonished, and then said: 'Ah, yes, you can, because people would be gentle with you, but I'm not strong, and can't bear rough play, and one does not like to spoil people's pleasure. I am not strong in anything but walking. I can walk down most people, because I am so slight, but that is not good for me. When one was a child one could throw stones into brooks, and build bridges over them. I could do that still, but there is nowhere to do it.'

There was something so touching in his look altogether, a strange mixture of the childlike and the manly that will prevent me from ever losing the vivid impression. He spoke about work-play, as he calls it, and work-rest, said that he was happy as long as he was at work, but he couldn't go on working because of his health, and directly he began to play he was miserable. I asked if he did not find it difficult, almost impossible, to do *any*thing without an amount of earnestness and thought which rendered it fatiguing. He said, 'Oh, no, I can play, but I am wretched over it.'

But now beside this picture of Ruskin at play or business, alone, or unhappy, set another. See him with his face beaming with joy, his eyes bright, his voice low and clear, his words flowing like perfect music that would say and suggest the thoughts of a soul such as his; telling of the colours that glowed and forms that were perfect, of the delicate touch, the steady hand, the self-controlled spirit, the loving heart, the solemn thought that had been stilled for us in death, leaving truly traces that we may cherish and study, which may prove beacons to lead us forward. See him with courage to begin, and power to succeed. He tells of things so subtle I should have despaired of the possibility of anyone being able to convey the thoughts, or even awaken them where they existed in another's mind. See him connecting all things with the highest things we know of; telling me that he doesn't know why interlaced hands are so really delightful, unless it is that they suggest the unity, connection, mystery of all things, the eternal dependence of each thing on another, lines, colours, sounds, and above all, people being bound together by mutual dependence. As he says in the *Stones of Venice*, the souls that are unlike, and the nations that are unlike, and the natures that are unlike, being bound into one noble whole by each receiving the other's gifts, and the other's glory. It is evident that he is happy when at work. His voice alters strangely, being decidedly not clear when he is out of his element.

I am so happy when I am with him. I enjoy a little mirth and fun, and I find he trusts me more than I should have thought possible from his small knowledge of me. He says he means to teach me to play, and as a beginning

he is going to send me a book that he has been reading. He was so kind about it, and about everything else. He taught me a great deal in a few words. I think now that he will not give up my training to anyone else. It is my impression that he has not a great many persons to sympathize, even as much as I can, in all his delights; and his life is passed more in writing than in talking to people, and he feels an interest in and sympathy with his pupils. As he is going to 'play' he will have more time now.

To M. H.

June 24, 1856

Of all the ways of working I think Ruskin's alone right. He does not say or think of paying you for work done. He says: 'You have power, you must be given the means to use it; don't trouble yourself any more about how you are to live. I have been given means, take some of them, live, set your mind at ease. But don't think I am doing you a personal favour, or a favour at all. I am but carrying on the work I was sent to do. I work for other generations. I work a great deal by educating other workers; for personal selfish gratification. I might derive more by spending my money on buying Turners, but I did not come into the world for that. I know in this age of clockwork and machinery, towns and factories, when thoughts even are expressed by steam, and man is thought a fool for trusting another; such a system, such a spirit, is utterly incomprehensible. How should we know that people did their most if they did not come at six and leave at six, with an hour for dinner? Oh, mighty wise manufacturer, are you quite sure that your workers do their most and best now? But when you want a friend

you don't go among your workers. But mind, I don't set my face against factories, or even against regular hours of work, only against that suspicion which believes all people anxious to do as little as they can, and acts accordingly. Oh, let people hedge themselves in with receipts, accounts, and policemen if they believe in nothing else, let them believe that society stands on suspicion, but somehow or other they will build the society they care for most in this world, their *family*, upon other ground. I only feel heartily thankful I am clear of all who take that view of work.'

Join with me in rejoicing in Ruskin's thoughtful kindness, feel with me as if you were glorified by it. Bless him for all kind words. Wish him all joy, strength, power, peace. Hope that he may never be alone, but have fellowship, if not human fellowship.

To Miss Harrison

December 4, 1856

I want to tell thee of Ruskin's visit to us. He was so happy evidently while he was here. His power is so delightful. He spoke of Carlyle, and in one sentence impressed on me for ever a living, burning truth about his way of seeing all things. Only think of the glorious delight of listening to such words that are no longer words but thoughts. So slight, so strong, so full of sympathy, and yet so lonely, so full of joy, and yet so touched with sadness, so beautifully kind. I did feel as if an angel, and yet a very human one, were there. I felt and feel most highly honoured, and deeply blest in seeing three such people on my birthday as Mary (Harris), Mr. Maurice, and Ruskin.

To M. H.

December 23, 1856

I have been to Ruskin's to-day. He wrote, and began his letter 'My dear Octavia.' I rejoice very much in the words themselves, I like to think of them; but more than that I think they show he wishes to know more of us. The letter altogether was very kind indeed, but not so much so as he was himself to-day. He was on the point of leaving town for a day or two, when I arrived, so I was not long with him; but when he went he said to me that I was free to look at all I cared to see in his own study! He left the cheffoniers unlocked, told me how to treat the Turners up there, and said I was quite welcome to roam about downstairs, where Lucy would uncover the Turners for me. He was sorry the rooms were cold below, but he would have fires lighted directly. I begged him not, and fortunately could say with truth that I had to go directly. He is coming to spend another evening here. I said we had so much enjoyed his visit, to which he replied: 'Yes, we were all *very* happy.'

I am really now to begin the illumination for Mrs. Browning, or, as I like to think of it, for Ruskin, 'Caterina to Camoens.'

From J. R.

April 1857

My Dear Octavia,

Six hours a day is as much as you can possibly work at painting. But you oughtn't to have much of that advising and lamenting. It is quite adverse to all good work. I know that well. Whensoever I want to do anything decently well, I must shut doors or go to

the hills. Convents were glorious things after all, weren't they?

Yours affly.,
J. Ruskin

Octavia *to* J. R.

April 1857

I don't know, I am sure, dear Mr. Ruskin, whether convents were glorious things, or not, I suppose they helped to educate learned men, clearly they taught great illuminators. But I don't think that either in convents, or even among the hills, people, who thought to escape from evil, found rest; for surely, is it not so? evil must be fought with and conquered, not run away from, and we shall find evil spirits within ourselves, which can only be cast out by trust in One mightier and nobler than they. All honour to those who leave the troubled world to work for it, not to escape from it. But I ask myself, is there not for us all a rest and peace and quiet even amid the change and evil of men, in the sure consciousness of a Father who is leading them to Himself? The convents had their work to do. I believe they did not fall till it was done. I believe they must have done it better the more they recollected how closely men are bound together; how they have no right to separate themselves from one another. The convents had a work to do, but I suppose, as God has placed me in London, He means to teach me that He has a work for me to do here, and not among the hills, which He has not shown to me.

The lamenting, I am sure, is wrong, and I trust to be delivered from it. The advising, as far as it is right and true, is God's work, and I must ask for strength to perform it better and better. I think the wrong is in me, and

not in it, if it interferes with my work. I hold that everyone ought to have such peace in his soul that the wars around cannot trouble him. I cannot have been given a work to do, and placed where it cannot be done. Therefore, I trust and hope that, as the hills, mists, mountain-torrents and solitary places are not given me, as I cannot see them when I long for them most, still more impatiently because you seemed to imply that not seeing them when I am very young I shall not love them when (if) I ever see them, I shall yet be able to do the work I have to do. I might put a note of interrogation to all the practical application of what I have said about London or isolated work. I am sure you know much better than I do about work, rest, quiet, indeed all things. It sometimes seems to me as if I had appeared to forget this too much, when I have written or talked to you. I am sure that a consciousness of it has always existed in me. I have never forgotten the presence of the author of *Modern Painters*, and all I have said has been really as a question to you, from whom I feel it so great a blessing to learn. Will this at all explain the mystery of why I like to come 'to be scolded'? If you could realize what your books have been to me, with what childlike reverent spirit I have always listened to your words, you would perhaps let me also sign myself

Yours affectionately,

OCTAVIA HILL

To M. H.

June 12, 1857

I have had such a sad letter from Ruskin. I wish he saw more of you. I don't believe him to be really unhappy, on the whole. I believe there is occasionally a deep, sad sense of want, but he has so much more joy than others,

such a power of casting himself entirely into that which he is working for, so great a human sympathy with comparative strangers, and so deep a trust in that which is beyond all the rest, that I feel he is happy.

To M. H.

September 20, 1857

Just in the midst of all this whirl of business and wretchedness Ruskin answered by return of post a letter I wrote to him, and so kindly and so beautifully that I fairly cried. There is something so great in all he writes, so infinitely beyond oneself, one bows in happy reverence. You can't feel as I do about his letters, the chief glory of them, which is the answer they are, not to my words, but to my thoughts. Once, long ago, I used to think Ruskin was like a grand lonely being on the hills far away, whose voice the wind bore, rich and blessed thoughts, far over the land to the cities below. I used to long that the wind might for a moment change, and bear our words up to him. It did, and, as prayers are often answered that we may feel their worthlessness, I found that I had nothing to give that could take the sadness off that face—knowing him has indeed been a blessing to me, but it is because I *have* known him better, understood the words the wind brings more fully, bowed my spirit to his more completely.

From OCTAVIA

Undated

MY DEAR MR. RUSKIN,

Since you have asked me what it is that makes me determine to use what power I have to draw, I must

mention dreams to you, which are probably never meant to be carried out in their present form, but at the root of which there is a purpose, which I believe God will help me to carry out in whatever way He sees fit. There are many things I have really seen, of which I should like to preserve some record before I die, incidents in common life that showed some good, which we disbelieve in, or things which might wake somebody's conscience or sympathy. I have a distinct vision of an attic I hope to possess, when I have time and money to procure and use one little spot for quiet. My St. Michael would be on its walls, and inscriptions, and I should like to preserve a record of some of the numberless messages natural things have recalled to me. Oh, the colours of that attic! I long to paint our houses and churches. I think to arrange beautiful colour, to show what I believe God's works are the symbols of, and to tell a little about the good and the suffering I have seen, these are the only desires I have about it all. I care immensely, almost exclusively, for decorative art. My room, my home, my college, my church are my dreams, when I dream. I have puzzled people because I have set myself so resolutely to become a painter, and yet have cared for people so very much. If I did *not* care for them, would not all that is not selfish in my artistic plans be lost? If I had no desire to set down my faith in righteous strength, St. Michael's figure on my walls would have lost its glory. If I did not care that little boys in the back streets should have some pleasure, the earnest faces of the little children, who stretched their heads out of the attic window into the sunlight on the first spring day that they might see the little lark and hear his full song,

would have no interest for me.—I dare say other people have seen better things than I have seen. I am not sure how far they can ever be as precious to me, or seem to me so much to meet the wants of this time. But colour and form (certainly in landscape) are so delicious to me that I should be quite happy to spend my working life in copying, though I believe that I should always require some social work. I should be the more ready to devote myself to copying, because I believe we are not half humble enough, that we do want to put *our* thoughts, *our* notions forward, and will not set our energies to reverent hard work. I know that the excellence of the old masters has never been shown me yet, I don't know what I shall think when (if ever) it is; I should be quite thankful to copy Turner, but I must preach a Gospel to the people by word or brush too, somehow, and certainly if I could paint I could do it better with the latter. But I cannot, of that I am most firmly convinced, and the more I think of it the more I hope that I may go on learning simply that, till some of the conceit is knocked out of me, and some of the unquiet and foolishness. The business question of whether I have any right to monopolize so much help and teaching is quite a separate one, one, I think, for you to decide. I believe you will decide it for me; these people who depend on me prevent my helping myself much. I wonder whether I have any right to expect any further joy and privilege than to be permitted to work for them and help them. I don't know what it costs you to help me, whether it does prevent you from helping others, whether I have not had my share of help. I am frightfully selfish at this moment, I feel as if I could say I will do anything if I

may but go on learning, and it costs me no effort to do anything but give up learning. What mighty generosity mine is!

Yours afftly.,
OCTAVIA HILL

To M. H.

December 11, 1857

I have been this morning to work at Marlborough House, and Ruskin is at work there himself. I am not in the same room with him, but he comes sometimes to look at my drawing. He said how sorry he was to have delayed sending an etching to me, and when I answered that I was sorry to trouble him, he replied so kindly, 'You never gave me any trouble at all.' He spoke of the evening he had spent with us with such pleasure.

Can you fancy me at work by a large window opening above the wide gravel and smooth grass and purple brown network of trees, bounded by a delicious red-brick wall, which in places takes a crimson shade? A gold frame with eight Turner sketches hung on the shutter before me, all my working things on a nice wide window ledge, and my little book on my knee.

To M. H.

January 29, 1858

Ruskin is really very much pleased with my work; told me so with such joy, thanked me for it, as if it were particularly kind of me to do it, and praised me with such evident delight in the power to do so. I determined to ask him about whether and how I should try to set down in drawing any of the gloriously wonderful

things I see, day after day, in the streets and everywhere, but which depend on expression. He had told me, long ago, that subtle expression might be given easily, in a few lines, by those who have the power, and that the best way to learn to do it was to copy *Punch*, Leech's things. He told me that the ludicrous was easily rendered, but the pathetic was *most* difficult. He said it required one's entire time to master it, and that at present my work was better turned on Turner. He told me how often he longed to do this, and what wonderfully beautiful expressions he saw in the streets, indeed in almost every face. I said how sad it was that people, who had the power, always directed it to portray the ridiculous. He said it was indeed sad, but that this was a much easier branch, and that the other did not pay; every one, comparatively, perceived humour, few cared for pathos. I think this is especially true of pathos rendered in a sketch. He consoled me, and himself evidently, too, by saying that the nobler view would be shown. He thinks Pre-Raphaelites will turn their attention to it, and so will architectural workmen. He advised me to try to do it, if I liked, and said it would do me good, promised to send me Richter's Lord's Prayer to see, but he said 'at present let Turner be your *work*.' I told him that nothing was further from my wish than to leave Turner, especially as one of the things I have really found and proved to be true is that human and artistic work ought to go hand in hand, as shown in *Aurora Leigh*, that one is incomplete without the other; so very much of my work is turned upon human things, that I should not willingly turn my art towards them also. I feel that such a life would be intensely wearing. The thoughts of land

and lake, and cloud, leaf and sunbeam at once rest the overtasked and sorrowing worker, and teach of the beauty and peace of God's work which is prepared and intended pre-eminently for His children. Before this, Ruskin had said, 'If you devote yourself to human expression, I know how it will be, you will watch it more and more, and there will be an end of art for you. You will say "*Hang* drawing!! I must go to help people."' I told him it would not be so. Oh, he was so kind, I have never known him more so. He understood in a moment what I meant, and what I wanted to say. I told him how much we were enjoying *Modern Painters*.

From OCTAVIA

4, RUSSELL PLACE
January 29, 1858

DEAR MR. RUSKIN,

In spite of your account of your letter to my sister I assure you I find plenty in it. In the first place it is not *quite* consistent, for first you mention your natural desire for the 'cave, stones, moss, etc.' and then you say it is not any trouble to you to attend to tickets and other people's drawings, etc. I know how it is, both are strictly perfectly true; you don't find the latter things troublesome, because you believe it right to do them, because you enter into the pleasure you give. But believe me, all those to whom you give it weigh the value of the joy you give up in devoting your thoughts and time, and feel your gifts greater, and trust that you will receive a fuller joy for all you lose. It is all very well to write about 'a drawing I want for my own purposes,' but some people's purposes are the very ground of the honour

and gratitude we feel for them. I shall be very grateful when any drawing of mine will help your purposes in some other way besides teaching me; not because I don't enter sufficiently into your spirit to be happy in owing so much to you, but because I would have its purpose fully carried out.

I am glad you imagine the many things people do for me; it is often very touching, always very rejoicing. Well, you may say, 'Be less enthusiastic, less terribly grateful,' but one does not live in a world of such deeds for nothing; they teach one gratitude, one is forced to have a large heart to embrace all kinds of people, indeed, they would teach a stone enthusiasm. I feel towards almost everyone I know more deeply than I can express; they have taught me, softened me, gladdened me so much. And if we watch for colour in the London streets, we are rewarded by seeing and loving it in the whole space of bright sky, when we see it behind woods and hills, so all generous action, however slight, teaches us to feel it when fuller and greater. Now in God's sight they who give all are undoubtedly equal, but I cannot but feel your gifts are mightier, because I see them as parts of your complete dedication to the work you have undertaken, the clear, far, faithful sight of much that shall be for England after you, the uncalculating devotion of all your strength, to teach all you have learnt, and the generous sacrifice of your own inclinations to this object. Seen so, I don't think my gratitude or admiration a bit too great; of course, you do, however, not feeling how much in every little action the whole plan is revealed and felt. I don't think I should be better for giving up my gratitude, and I could no more destroy it than I

could help seeing with my outward eyes. Either power might be destroyed—the latter more easily, much. As to taking things quietly, I try to do that now, and will try more and more, no less deeply, but more faithfully, so that I may feel the whole tendency of the tide towards the shore, not every breaking and receding wave. Thank you for the reproofs, I'll take them all and think of them, for after all my defence, I believe you're sure to know best, only remember that parts of a whole feeling must be seen as such, or they will appear disproportionate. I can't help feeling a little sad that you can't have your nice cave, and chip stones and paint mosses; should you really be so very happy without all the expressions of faces you spoke of to-day? But indeed, in spite of all the precious character of London people, I would gladly give them up for one ray of sunlight on a bank of weeds, and how about a sunrise among the Alps? Sometimes, when I can only see one sunset cloud above the houses, dimmed with smoke, I think of all there is to see, but not for me to see.

Yours always gratefully,
OCTAVIA HILL

Is the signature not right? I didn't think of it.

From J. R.

April 18, 1858

MY DEAR OCTAVIA,

Take the offer, or any other which enables you to make your way in the world and be of use. As soon as you can do without help from me in money (help in all other ways I shall always be ready and happy

when I can give) you can tell me, but meantime get on in calmness of mind, laying by anything you can save; and as long as you need work I can always find you what will be useful to me, so don't worry yourself.

Yours always faithfully,

JOHN RUSKIN

From J. R.

May 8, 1858

DEAR MISS HILL,

If you mean that you want to paint complete natural leaves it *cannot* be done in ornamental work. You must be an artist or nothing. You seem to make the usual mistake of supposing conventionalism to mean nonsense, that is non-nature. It means *practical* nature. When you outline a leaf with black the outline is conventional, the only way you have of showing the form on certain terms. You needn't outline it absurdly. There are also certain qualities in non-natural ornament, as bands, etc., to which you need not limit yourself. But to *conventional* representation you must limit yourself or become an artist at once.

Most truly yours,

J. RUSKIN

To M. H.

May 15, 1858

Ruskin has gone till October 15th. He will be away in Switzerland. How he will enjoy it! I am heartily glad he is gone. He looked like a bird just on the point of flying, as he wished them all good-bye at Marlborough House. He is to write to give me instructions about my work, but when will he do it?

To M. H.

June 1, 1858

I have just returned from a morning at the Royal Academy. The pictures I shall remember with most pleasure are first, one by Wallis of an old stone-breaker, dead on his heap of stones in the twilight. The words underneath are from Tennyson's dirge: 'Now is done thy long day's work,' and the extract from Carlyle, 'Hardly entreated brother. For us were thy straight limbs and fingers deformed; thou wert our conscript on whom the lot fell, and fighting our battles wert so marred. For in thee, too, lay a God-created form; but it was not to be unfolded, encrusted must it stand with the thick adhesions and defacements of labour, and thy body like thy soul was not to know freedom.' The figure is singularly pathetic, in that nothing has been done to render it interesting or attractive in any way. It is all real therefore, I believe it all firmly, and the man is *only* great in being a man and a worker, and you thank God for him that he is to rest; his grey head half-bowed rests against a bank all clothed with fern, ivy and grass, his old worn hammer has fallen from the grasp of his bent fingers and lies useless on the flints, the whole figure is bent as it were broken by toil, the hawthorn, bramble, and grass stand out clearly defined against a golden glow of evening light, the distant hills, too, blue and dark, rise against it, reflected far below in a solemn stream of calm, wide water. The whole scene grand in truth, and in the solemn brightness of the far-away sky, everything earthly dark against it, the shades gathering over the face, to which no light shall come any more, but from without. It is not altogether a sad picture, for the old

man has gone from the world of toil, and one is not forcibly drawn to think of those left behind. One fancies how he will look in this quiet lane, when the moon comes out, but not what sorrow he leaves behind him.

There is near this picture one which Ruskin speaks of as a calm sea-glory of Venice, and it truly is that. It is quite impossible to convey any idea of the bright space of calm water reflecting the most glorious sunset, gold and crimson glory of sky, with purple clouds, exquisite purple clouds, light in themselves, but dark against it. A few boats sending dark reflections along the resplendent coloured surface of the water, the boats and a few posts, dark on one side of the picture, catching the golden light, and leading one's eye along a bright line which they form. A solid dark campanile rises out of the water. I was much impressed by my increased interest in landscapes, compared especially with subject pictures. And also with the degree in which I appreciated the nobleness of simple joy. Much is said, and much has to be said, about the nobleness of suffering, but that is a mighty, glorious nature which can greatly rejoice. For joy may comprehend admiration, sympathy, thankfulness, and be the satisfaction of our spiritual nature by that which meets it. And when I speak of simple joy I mean a feeling, not a thought, a spontaneous gust of delight, which may indeed be the result of a hard long life, which has trained us to see greatly, but which is, at the moment, no effort, not the result of definite thought, but a natural gladness of heart. I felt this joy strongly called up by one or two landscapes by Linnell. One called the 'Wheatfield.' It is a bright day in late summer, and over a gentle swell and

hollow, the corn grows; the reapers are already at work, and some of the corn is cut and the gleaners are there. A tall hemlock and thistle under a tree specially pleased me, and the poppies. Beyond over a hill the shadow of a great white cloud, and bright spaces of sunshine were wonderfully beautiful, but best and gladdest of all was the sunlight and shadow on the wheat and poppies. It was a holy picture to me, because of its untroubled joy. Why should we always bring our cares to nature? Why not take her as the great refresher and strengthener? The whisper from flowers and hills, and that bright Venetian sky, did one indeed good. I never saw so sweet a collection of children; one a lovely earnest little girl reading fairy-tales. I feel refreshed, delighted, and instructed by the exhibition, and never before enjoyed the pictures so much.

To M. H.

September 24, 1858

I was shown into Ruskin's study. He asked after my health, and said: 'I am sorry to see you in mourning.' He placed a chair for me saying, 'Here is your old place ready for you, you see.' He asked after all at home. I hastened to undo my drawings. Then began the drawing lesson, of which I can give you but a slight idea. He showed me sketches, he drew little illustrations. I think he was decidedly pleased with my work. Luncheon was brought in, and I said: 'And you really have not enjoyed your summer after all.' 'Not at all; oh, yes, at the end I did, eating melons and going to the theatre.' We went on to talk of the death of all sensibility to nature. I urged that it was no natural result of its exercise, but

the want of something else. I did not believe in its death, because it did not seem right. But he said: 'Wordsworth tells it you, and so do I, so you ought to believe it.' 'No,' I said, 'it is very sad indeed, and I don't believe it. I don't mean because it is sad. I believe plenty of sad things, but not that which is wrong. Why should a noble power die, not grow?' 'True, but yet this simple nature is enough for our daily joy, but when the nobler things cease to be fresh to us, they lose their influence. I believe the chief joy of childhood is this newness and wonder of all things.' 'You know, I don't believe in the great happiness of childhood,' I said, 'but in the growth of what is noble.' 'Then why can't I enjoy the Alps?' he said. 'I can suggest one thing about delight. Whenever we begin to think about our own feelings we cannot be happy.' 'But I have been thinking of mine ever since I went away, of little else. Dear me,' he continued, 'that is quite a new thought to me. But why should this be so?' 'Is it not because we are not meant to dwell on ourselves, because feelings, especially our own, are not fit subjects for contemplation, nor fit aims for effort? They are not noble enough, especially when self-centred.' 'Most true,' he said. 'I know,' I went on, 'that the forgetfulness of self is precisely *the* most difficult thing to attain.' He said that he had no troubles, that troubles serve as foils to pleasures, that the intense occupation of the mind to business enables it to relax with great delight. But that in him the natural death had gone on. He wanted larger Alps. 'And do you think that larger Alps would satisfy you?' 'Not at all.' 'You have half-explored the glories of these, you want something else.' And he said earnestly, humbly, sadly, 'What is it I want?' For one

moment I paused: 'You can hardly expect me to tell you what you want.' Ruskin said: 'True, and to turn from my affairs to yours. Will you tell me how you are going on? I have been wanting to know.' So I could not help telling him about our anxieties, and Miranda's illness.

Then we spoke of rest. I told him that I believed in but one kind of rest to those who *live*, i.e. that felt in the entire delight in a person, human or divine. I sat looking out at the trees and sky, and seemed to be looking into the future, and I think he felt that life was very hard to me, and I went on to say how little I thought I should do any good, before I was worn out. I turned round, after a moment, to meet a face of such sympathy as I can never forget. I had spoken quite joyfully, you may be sure, as I feel when I have faced the worst. He said that I ought to be able to take rest, such as lying on a grassy bank looking up into the sky, counting the petals of a flower and forgetting instantly how many there were. I told him that was a state that it was possible belonged only to the past, that as one grew older that went. If he meant *that* I could believe in it. 'Oh, no,' he said, 'I mean rest now, which ought to be possible at all times. If it is not, the nature has been overwrought. The feeling that goes is that which enabled one to write one's best passages. Oh, you don't know what a prosy volume this will be. I can *see* beauty, but I don't feel it as a fact.' 'It does not teach you?' I said.

We were talking about sorrow, and how it affected different people. Ruskin maintained that it was saddest for the young, who ought to be thoroughly enjoying everything. 'If old people are not looking to the next world, it seems to me that they can have little joy at

all.' 'Ah,' I said, 'you separate the two worlds a great deal more than I should. I believe that he who is not looking to the next world will never enjoy this; and he who cares little for this world will fail to realize or love the next.' I was glad to find that he thoroughly liked and believed this. He said a strange thing, when speaking of Miranda leaving home. 'I don't see why sisters should keep together more when they are single, than when they marry. It is woman's work to go among strangers and bless them, whenever called.' ' More their duty than that of men?' I put in. 'Of course,' he replied; 'now if there were three brothers I can see why they should keep together.' I said that I felt wrong in having taken up so much of his time. He only answered. 'We have had a most happy afternoon.' I don't know when I should have come away, we seemed still to have more and more to say, but at last I resolutely tied up my drawings and put on my gloves. You will see that he talked principally to get to know what I meant and felt, not to instruct me, or even to express his noblest convictions.

To M. H.

November 1, 1858

I had a most refreshing holiday. I went to Cambridge to hear Ruskin lecture. I can give you no idea of its glorious beauty. I never heard anything like the prolonged and wondrous music of his description of the view from the garden of a villa. I had felt painfully how Ruskin knew that he had little sympathy from his audience, but when he came to one part, the whole body of people listened in awe. I only knew it by the applause

that burst and rolled out. He had carried the whole audience with him, and they felt that there was someone present greater than themselves. I heard the applause with triumph, but I heard it far off, and I only saw the single, slight, noble figure standing there in the light. I knew that there was more heart-value in the gradual, continual, silent sympathy of those who had worked near him, and traced his power in his slighter sentences, his glory in his quiet spirit-work than in all that deafening roar.

When the lecture was over, he made his way up to us, shook hands with Mamma and me, and said: 'I'm afraid you make no stay in Cambridge.' 'No, we leave to-morrow.'

From Octavia

Undated

My dear Mr. Ruskin,

You ask what I want to do. It is a large question, one that recalls vividly the brightest, wildest dreams of what I long to do. I am always trying to forget the question, and to think only what I ought to do. I am afraid to dwell on it, because I have come to much better results from doing things simply because they came in my path, than I have ever done when I have made plans of what I would like to do. Nevertheless, there are purposes and thoughts and wishes in one so strong that no events or time can change them; they have been the ruling principles of one's life, one is led back to them by ways one least recognized. For years all that I have longed to say has come to me in visible forms, pictures, or symbols. I have not learnt what to say from pictures, but

among people, among trees and flowers, or quite alone. I have puzzled people because I desire so earnestly to be a painter, and yet love the world and its inhabitants so much. If I did not love them, if I had in no degree learned what ought to be said to them, I should care very little whether or not I ever tell them what I see and believe. Even my cherished dream of the attic I mean to possess, if ever I have time and money to procure a little spot to be alone in, would lose its principal charm. I want to paint my St. Michael on its walls, and to write the inscriptions on them that I may set down my faith in righteousness and strength that is for all of us. Certainly my plans about the delicious colours in the room might be retained, but much even of their glory depends on their being types of things which are precious to us all.

From J. R.

December 16, 1858

My dear Octavia

I like the account you give of the two young ladies; and I will try to be of some use to them through you. You know probably better than I how many girls are in circumstances more or less similar; still I hope as my influence extends that I may be a little more serviceable than I have yet to those who are brought directly in my way. Only I am always divided between a certain chivalresque delight, which, of course, a man always has in helping women, and a somewhat depressing doubt of the expediency of stirring in such matters. I find my girl protégées (except you) very sufficiently troublesome, full of wild, unmanageable feeling, and my power of assisting them is so broken by the impossi-

bility of seeing as much of them as I ought, or thinking as carefully for them as I ought, that I sometimes believe my old-lady friends are right in saying I oughtn't to concern myself with them at all. The work which I may be able to give will be chiefly copying. But then, accuracy means so much, you yourself are nothing near the mark yet. The Claude foreground is, however, a step in advance.

Thanks for consolation about *Evil Stars*. Kind regards to Mamma.

Yours afftly.,
J. RUSKIN

To M. H.

December 1858

I wrote to tell Ruskin how much I thought girls wanted teaching and rebuking, and how very much I thought we wanted protests against the tolerance of their vanity and foolishness, etc.; how I thought that they wanted to be told that 'wild, unmanageable feeling' was their curse, from which they ought to free themselves. I said that the best of them aspired towards an ideal of wisdom, temperance, and quiet self-control, which they were often told they could not reach. I said how glad we were to receive help given in a true spirit of chivalry, which delights in helping all, but how entirely I disliked to hear him talk nonsense which he said he half meant.

After I had written, I felt quite grieved, as if I had been attacking him, and the fir-trees in his garden in the rain made such a mournful sighing, the dripping sounded so monotonously lonely, I was very glad to get his letter last night.

From J. R.

December 18, 1858

My dear Octavia,

You have relieved my mind a little on this point of girlhood. I should like also to relieve yours about the things you are quite right in saying I only half mean. But I seldom say anything which I don't mean—at least about a third:—mostly when I say anything shocking I mean it entirely—only in a sense which if the reader or hearer don't understand, I can't make him understand. But some few things very shocking to you I say with sorrowful belief of their entire truth.

Which do you mean? or what kind?

J. R.

To M. H.

December 1858

During the day arrived a lovely group of four pieces of gold, green, and deep blue felspar; such a glow of colour, with the brilliancy and many times the depth of mother of pearl! A Christmas present from Ruskin; sent without a word, but speaking of his remembrance of my love of colour, which I prize more than many words. I am writing now, gladdened by the flashes of the lighted colour of these lovely stones beside me on the table.

When I asked Ruskin if he could come on my birthday, he said: 'I will if I can. It would be a great pleasure, and more than that, it does me a great deal of good.' He wants me to draw at Dulwich.

Ruskin gave a lecture to his class at the Working Men's College. After advising them to visit France, he said: 'Now, there are many things people will advise you to take in your knapsack, but there is one thing I would ask you all to take, and that is plenty of patriotism. But mind, patriotism is much misunderstood nowadays; it is thought to mean love of one's country, and so it does, but it does not mean disliking other countries. Every noble man loves the country of his youth, because youth is the time of sacrifice and obedience. I believe this is the secret of the happiness of childhood. We ought to love our country as we do our parents, but we don't go about saying: "My father and mother are good and nice, but your father and mother are nasty people." And remember you have to represent your country nobly; behave abroad so that people shall judge England to be a great nation.'

From J. R.

January 31, 1859

My dear Octavia,

I've seen the Claude, it is excellent and will do admirably; you have taken great pains. Now do the rolling sky, either in colour or light and shade, as you like, colour perhaps best, but mind the *forms*. It must be real size, but only the rolling cloud wanted—finish it off as well as you can vignetted wise, you mustn't put any tree boughs across it.

Always yours afftly.,

J. R.

From J. R.

February 2, 1859

My dear Octavia,

Any time will do for the Salvator. I thought you would come to a smash with all that sentimental business of teaching and what not—no wonder you've been ill, but what's been the matter that you speak so seriously? Perhaps you oughtn't to work for the present. Let me know.

Truly yours affectionately,

J. R.

From J. R.

November 2, 1859

My dear Miss Hill,

My letter will already have answered your question about coming on your birthday. I may by this ill written but very positive assurance of my entire satisfaction with your progress, relieve your mother's mind, at least as far as Mrs. Hill's anxiety relates to your fitness for *my* work. If Mrs. Hill expects you to make progress such as would enable you to make an income as an artist, in a short period, she will be disappointed—you will not, at least by the method of work which you necessarily follow with me. It will be plodding and little rewardful labour for several years yet. If after that time you feel able to take a higher position than you could in any copying toil, I should be rejoiced to allow you to do so, but I have no power of forming an estimate of probabilities in this respect. Your zeal and industry will always be of great value to me, and your progress is all I desire hitherto. With sincere regards to your

Mother and sisters, and with great regret that I can't come to-morrow—finally, with best wishes for your happiness on that and all other days of the year. Believe me, my dear Octavia,

Affectionately yours,
J. RUSKIN

To M. H.

103, MILTON STREET
July 1, 1860

Ruskin's volume[1] is out, and I have seen it for a moment or two, just seen four of my own scraps in it, and a word or two in the preface about me, which delighted me. It implies no praise whatever of power or skill, but just says that my help has been, what I hope nearly everyone's is, 'disinterested.' It is a great pleasure to me that he should have thought of mentioning me, and I am perfectly satisfied with what he says. The kind of work is worth very little, and one knows it is tolerably well done, or he would not have said so to me, or used it; but I know no more of what he thinks about my work than I did before.

From J. R.

October 31, 1860

MY DEAR OCTAVIA,

Luckily your letter came at breakfast. I've asked now. My father will look if he has promised his presentation (to Christ's Hospital). I hope not. Don't let those children want for anything really needful.

I've more power of little helps just now, having been buying no pictures lately.

[1] *Modern Painters.*

From J. R.

October 19, 1860

My dear Octavia,

The reason your letter did me good was that it was so strong and cheerful. I being at present in a sort of jelly-fish contraction state which your good hope and spirit enlivened or at least shook.

Always affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin

To M. H.

November 12, 1860

I have been succeeding so gloriously with my drawing. Ruskin is delighted. I am to copy a whole set of coloured sketches by Turner, I have succeeded so well with the first. He has been writing such delightful letters, and is coming on my birthday.

From J. R.

January 22, 1861

My dear Octavia,

I am delighted to hear of your being so happy and staying so long (in Cumberland) as you like. Of the work take that which will give you least thought and most pay. I cannot guide you better, and you are apt to give yourself too much anxiety and moral trouble; the most mechanical work that you can at all enjoy will be the best for you, and the best for me also for *my* work, to which it will leave your energy unbroken.

If you like to come out on Saturday to tell me about your Cumberland visit, I will let you in, but I won't answer questions about work. I hate thinking just now.

Yours affectionately,

J. Ruskin

To M. H.

March 17, 1862

I told you I had written to Ruskin about a fresh copy, in a dry, complaining tone. Well, I got up on Monday feeling ill. Everything seemed to make me worse until I arrived at the Gallery hot and tired.

'Mr. Ruskin wishes to see you,' the porter said, and straightway I was shown in to him. Though Ruskin was as kind as could be, nothing seemed to rouse me from my melancholy. He had a fresh drawing ready for me; praised the one I had finished, and gave me a lesson on it, such as I have not had for many a long day. 'How was I?' 'Ill.' 'What was the matter?' 'Overtired.' 'Was it with walking?' Well, it was no good giving advice that people couldn't follow, but he was very sorry. How were they all at home? 'Not well, so I was out of spirits about my drawing.' He said mournfully: 'What is to become of us bad ones, if you good people cannot console yourselves about a drawing? If you ever know what it is to have worked for ten years for nothing, then——!' I was cut to the heart for my selfishness and gloom, and I said: 'I believe in the *feeling* of having worked for ten years for nothing, but not in the *fact*, and I must not be classed with good people or the inconsolable.' But it was no good. I had lost by my ill-temper the opportunity of bearing witness of faith and cheering Ruskin, and I thought that I had only made matters worse; so after Ruskin had told me that I had overtired myself and could not draw, I went away. He was throughout as kind and gentle as could be. And I came away with the firm determination to undo what I had done. I wrote a long letter explaining how I had arranged my work this year,

so that fatigue should not touch my drawing, putting all my many classes on one day, so as to have the others free, in the mornings and my daily teaching in the afternoons. I asked him if it would help my drawing to take lessons from Mr. Bunny, and that I had some extra work, which would pay for them. Then I added: 'But before you go, we shall see you here. We are all looking forward to it with such pleasure, and I want you to see something of what our home is, though of course that depends on its daily work and tone, on how it stands in time of trial, on its growth in all knowledge and power of helping people, not on its bright single evenings, though perhaps, even these take their colour from what has gone before.' Then I told him how interesting and precious all in it is to me; there are such histories about all we do possess, perhaps such hopes about the former. As to the absence of lovely things, the day may come when we may possess pictures, or rich colours; at present I feed on these when away, and return to glory in my little library, and to feel that the complete sympathy of our lives is a comfort in an age of want. I had told him what a splendid power this is of gathered workers. We meet in the morning, and go out to our various works, and what a delightful thing to me is our dinner-time, for then we all relate our various adventures and wants and ignorances, and it is rarely that one or other has not a remedy, or knowledge to remove the evil. I told him how sorry I was whenever I did not bear witness to the comfort and strength of faith, how I believe habitually one's life does so involuntarily, and therein has power that draws all to it, so intensely strong is living faith. I spoke of the wonderful

way in which, with a strong feeling against any effort to convert people, I had watched them, when brought into the presence of such feeling, bow before it.

I quite agreed that mere hope of heaven did little to nerve one for work on earth; but that habitual perception of God's presence and love *did*; that our falling away from it is no proof of its being powerless to help. That I thanked him for the grand drawing-lesson which he had given me; and I said: 'It will be months, perhaps years before I have another, but I never talk or draw without remembering what I owe to you; and so hundreds feel—however you may talk of wasted time. Perhaps we all expect too much result from ten years' labour; but a blessing will come to us for every little soul we have helped.'

This note was posted on Friday afternoon. As I was quietly drawing on Saturday morning, at the Gallery, a policeman came in and laid down beside me about 30 engravings from Turner's loveliest drawings, saying: 'Mr. Ruskin has just come, and he told me to give you these; and he would like to see you downstairs, when you are quite at liberty.' I went downstairs feeling radiantly happy.

Mr. W. was with Ruskin, but he came forward, and did as people do when they thoroughly understand one another—shook hands as we looked at one another.

'You are busy,' I said; 'shall I come later?'

'No,' he said, 'I only wanted to thank you so very much for the kind, nice letter, and to tell you that I will give you a long drawing lesson some day soon. Thank you so much for the letter,' he repeated four times, and again as he shook hands with me, 'thank you.' We

seemed such good friends. Wasn't it satisfactory? and wasn't it much better than I deserved? What an answer he gave to the whole letter in that moment!

To M. H.

April 6, 1861

Dost thou know Mrs. Browning's *Fourfold Aspect*? I hope I am going to illuminate the last verse on a deep purple ground, like a bank of clouds at sunset, till I get to the word 'smile,' which will be gold, and then at 'behold in sudden glory,' etc., the letters will be scarlet and the field change suddenly to gold like the light near the horizon at sunset. Then a purple cloud will have floated down into the gold on the words: 'He stands brightly where the shade is' will appear in gold. Behind the words 'heart's wound when most gory by the longest agony,' I shall break a lurid grey. Every capital will illuminate beautifully. For instance, in the word 'Pray,' I shall form it of chains to recall Tennyson's: 'So the whole wide world is everyway bound by gold chains about the feet of God.' The dial, too, and its shadows, indeed, every word is fitted for illuminating.

From J. R.

May 1862

My dear Octavia,

It is all right—as far as anything is ever right. I knew you would break down again—the only thing is not to break *up*. One sort of break is like a carriage spring, which can be mended—the other like a ship's keel, which can't. Take care of yourself, and don't be a goose any more. When in the world did you think

I blamed you for not converting Africans? If there's any creature on earth I think more absurd and offensive than another (and always have) it's a Missionary (except always Livingstone and Colenso).

Ever affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN

My own belief is that in London no human being with any conscience can save themselves from overtoil but by resolutely locking their door at a given hour every day. Whether you lock yourself out or in, let the bolt be strong and irrevocable.—If people have good sense and no feeling, they can get on all day long, but good sense *with* feeling makes the feeling more fatal.

To M. H.

June 15, 1862

Well, I must hasten to tell thee all about Ruskin. I was sitting drawing in the Gallery, when he came in so gently and kindly, and almost brightly, asked how I was, etc., and then sat down. He said that he had little more than an hour, and would give me a good lesson, but had just come down to see my face and that I might see his, having been waiting and waiting for a quiet time to do so; most of his teaching must be by letter, and all my drawings were to be sent out to him, when, if good enough, Mr. Allen would engrave them in mezzotint; if not good enough, he would set me some other work, and set some one else to do them. He did not know who. He went on to speak of the awfully bad things people professing religion do. We spoke of what religion is,

and he defined it as the doing things to please God, not because they were right. I said on that definition I don't like religion. He was greatly delighted, but I hastened to add that I did not see how the delight of God could be separated from the performance of right. He replied, 'Practically thus: the moment you do things to please God, your notions about God affect your actions, and your natural sense of right is disregarded.' Then he went on to relate, with some sorrow and much bitterness, that he had invited Colenso to lunch with him, and C. had refused to meet him, because C. thought it would not please God. I feel sadly how such bigotry is driving him far from even the relics of faith. We went on talking about sorrows among the poor, and he said he was too much overwrought to do anything about individual cases, but hoped, if all were well, to write more about the root of the matter, which should reach those who would be really influential about it, and said, 'An after-dinner jest to Lord Palmerston or one of those men will do more than if you spent your life's blood in London.' I told him it might seem so, but that I should have far more faith in the years of work and suffering, and that I believed altogether more in life-preaching than word-preaching. To which he answered with all that nobleness of spirit that makes him what he is; the only trace of bitterness in his voice was shown in the half-doubt that mingled with his response, and yet seemed like an instrument suddenly put into tune. Long did we talk of all earnest work, of justice as the thing most needed, of alms-giving, needed now because the world is wrong, of life-preaching for all, and word-preaching for some, of the power of humble work in proving sincerity and

self-sacrifice and much more. Of my work, too, he spoke much. The Fra Angelico deeply impressed him, proving with some other little things that I had 'delicacy of touch for anything.' The Turners were much less satisfactory, as they demand a sort of power Ruskin has never allowed me to cultivate, fearing that I should lose accuracy, but now it is to be aimed at. When he was going, I said: 'They told me you were gone.' 'But you didn't believe it?' 'I did.' 'Oh!' with astonishment. 'Oh!' with affected satisfaction, 'then I am glad, I shall know another time what I may do.' 'Well, only it's a little hard because one bears things patiently'—and then came a dead pause which Ruskin filled in with the gentlest of all his tones of voice: 'Yes, it is, it is, but do you know I was very nearly dying when I left this year, and I turned over in my mind who would bear with me, whom I might neglect, without utterly breaking down, and I thought I might neglect you.' I assured him I was quite willing, and we parted.

To M. H.

June 15, 1862

Yesterday I drove to Burne-Jones's, and there was shown into a large studio where Ruskin and Butterworth were looking over some drawings. Ruskin called Burne-Jones and introduced me to him. Then he took me into another room to talk business. He said, 'I've been thinking about that Angelico. It shows great power; devote yourself to that sort of work. Leave the Turners. They are inimitable. I've given it up myself; everyone has given them up. Besides, Octavia, I have wanted so often to say to you, never let drawing interfere with any other

thing you may feel to be wanted. You have infinite sympathy and power of teaching and helping people, use it; feel it to be as much work for me as any other. 'You see,' he said, smiling, 'I feel you to be a very serviceable person, and I cannot have it on my conscience to monopolize you or to injure you. Above all things take care of your health; don't let it hurt your vanity to do nothing, but just rest as much as ever you want. Whenever you are well, and see anything good to be done, consider that you are my agent to do it. Mind there is one thing you can do to grieve me, and that is to hurt your health.' And so it ended; the good-bye was quickly said. I ought to be, and I think I am, very thankful. Certainly we are very good friends.

From J. R.

MORNEX
September 12, 1862

MY DEAR OCTAVIA,

I have since yesterday your nice letter. I am thankful you are getting on so well. You say nothing of your own strength—don't think you can support it by singing hymns, else you will find again 'Yet is their strength labour and sorrow.' Don't work too hard—nor too pathetically. I am a little better, and hope I am likely henceforward to gain. Thanks for your trust in me. I have tried it sorely. Never anyone's so much, whatever they say. As to my breaking appointments, with most people my folly was in ever making them.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN

From J. R.

FRANCE
October 12, 1862

MY DEAR OCTAVIA,

I was very grateful for your long, soothing, useful letter. I am better than I was, and getting better still, but only by keeping out of doors, or in old great books and out of all channels of thoughts of my own. I shall probably never more be good for much in talking or teaching, having taken a dislike to everything human, which grows upon me, and feeling no relief but in books, stones and flowers. I hope to be home about the middle of November. I will send for you immediately, and we'll have a long chat. I can endure so much humanity, at any rate, and you shall show me your drawings.

Remember me affectionately to your sisters.

Believe me, faithfully and affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN

From J. R.

MORNEX
March 12, 1863

MY DEAR OCTAVIA,

I have both your nice letters. I like that principle of yours that people are for ever what they are. It is one of the few truths which remain unquestionable to me, or rather which become more salient every day.

I like your account of your drawing work, etc. Angelico's colour *has* changed; the green ground has come out often in the shades.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN

To M. H.

June 23, 1863

Ruskin greeted us very kindly indeed, then asked about my health most kindly. I wish I could tell thee all we said, still more that thou could have seen his face. We spoke very much of faith, of what it was impossible to doubt; he spoke very beautifully, of course, very sadly, but there seems to me matter of deep thankfulness on the whole. He spoke of the awfulness of feeling left by God, of the perfect men not being left by Him, of the sense, even prophets had, of being left alone, of the blessing of the sense that they had when God returned. I said the sense, of course, was most terrible, most real, but that I could not believe that any one was really ever left. I spoke of the cry on the Cross: 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?'; of the certainty we all have that God was near then, that, whoever was or was not left, one was quite sure that the imperfect and weak would be the last to be left; of the sufficiency for all purposes of life of perfect trust in God, of our power to live in that when all other faiths shook and crumbled. Ruskin spoke of many doctrines that may be shaken, but added, 'Perhaps I ought not to talk to you about it, only I don't think I shall hurt you, and I want all the help you can give me.' I said there was little hope of any; *words* did almost nothing, all we could say he must have heard often. To-day he more fully than ever laid his doubts before me, or, rather, shall I say, let me *presume* them. I said: 'Well, if it be so, what remains? Doubt immortality if you can. Dare you not trust yourself, and even all men, to Him Who made and taught them? Doubt the Old Testament, and does not life remain?

I cannot interpret mine, or those I watch, without such a God as it shows. Doubt even the Gospels and what remains? I cannot lose from out of me the knowledge of the supreme sufferer and His infinite love; no other character can be that of the Father, Whose love is near us.'

At last, when we were coming away, he said (I had been reproaching the Pre-Raphaelites for their indifference, and he had been speaking of the sadness of his life in Switzerland): 'But, Octavia, you see it doesn't bear out your theory, for I was all right until I tried to do good, and interest myself about all sorts of things.' It was said with a deep pathos, but with a sort of tone as if he half knew that there might be an answer, and expected it. I answered: 'But then, my answer says, we do not see the end. Who knows but a better thing might come out of sorrow?' Almost hopefully, as he stood at the door, he said, 'Ah, yes, who knows? We shall see.' 'Some day,' I answered, 'assuredly we *shall* see.' And then, Mary, we left him alone. Minnie thought that the visit had been very satisfactory; so I am sure did I. Don't thou know, sometimes one seems able to speak out of the hope that is in one; the words seem to pour themselves out powerfully, and I had a strong sense that I understood the difficulty, even where we quite joined issue. I knew that we did and could say: 'Well, granting that, this remains, or I could not believe what life has taught me.'

To M. H.

June 7, 1863

About Ruskin's lecture: Well, I suppose it was infinitely beautiful, thoughtful, and above all bright throughout.

No dark doubts, or narrow, faithless scorns, no trace of any such, entirely far-seeing and expectant, and the deliberate expression of such sight and expectancy. But then it was deliberate throughout, written as a man writes who dares not trust his own impulse, or the sympathy of his audience, and, being thus prepared, it gained something in grandeur; but the undertone of sadness rang through it distinctly to those who know him, and came out in one or two spoken bits afterwards, and the melancholy was almost heart-breaking of his voice when he quoted, 'Blow, blow, thou wintry wind.' I had almost written *sang* instead of quoted, so did his voice sing with music. I am writing first of the spiritual side of the lecture, and of Ruskin. Set something down to my utter ignorance of Geology. I wish I could tell thee at all about the lecture itself, how he told us of the cracks and fissures, the weakness of the mountains filled with stronger substances, like mighty veins becoming bonds of union to all parts of the mountain, of how each atom of that gigantic mass is purifying itself daily, through ages, of the mighty, because incessant, movement of those apparently changeless hills; of the sympathy they seem to show men. The tone of the lecture was not of joyful sight of individual goodness in man, but of sure hope for him in the ages to come. After the lecture Ruskin saw Minnie and came with a glad smile to shake hands.

From J. R.

July 1863

My dear Octavia,

Take your (sketching) lessons by all means, and it makes me very happy that you can at last indulge

yourself a little with a free heart. It will do you all manner of good.

I am much touched by your thinking me *enough* careful or thoughtful about you all, and about Miranda because I sent to ask about her. I thought it looked the most ungracious and careless thing I had ever done to people I cared for, that I did not come to see about it myself. I should like to come now to see you all, but there are myriads of things I want to do, and can't, and constantly I am forced to do for importunate persons what I don't do for modest and gracious ones—but I love those best for whom I do least (or *most*); of course there are three classes—those whom I love and do little for—those whom I don't and do more for, and those whom I do, and do all (or would if they wanted me). This is not as it should be, and I mean to try to do better, but the difficulties I lie under through having no house of my own are endless—so much time wasted on useless duties, which nevertheless *are* duties it seems to me. I hate duty and all belonging to it in this curiously cramped and false shape it has got into in this age.

Yours afftly.,
J. RUSKIN

To M. H.

September 11, 1864

We are just on the brink of the great decision about the house. And the recollection of many weary walks has vanished in the great hope of a grand beginning; at least that rises clear and bright with lovely visions of what may open for us as the years go on; many a failure, and many a difficulty in store, no doubt, with broken and

changed plans; but I hope the coming years may find us with unbroken, unchanged determination. For once the possible to-bes look very bright, but clearer still than they, in the light of their glory, seem the days that are past. Thou wilt think of me to-morrow at 12 o'clock, when I go into Ruskin's study, that I entered first about ten years ago, and now receive the crowning help. I hardly dare, even in the face of Ruskin's letter, hope for the better house, it costs so much.

September 14th.—I went on Monday. Ruskin told me how glad he was to help me in this plan—with *money*, that he could not attend to business, but would introduce me to his lawyer, and put the matter in his hands, but added how glad he was to be connected with the work. This was just what I wanted. He paused. 'Shall I tell you about it all?' 'No, tell me about the best plan you know.' 'But that is so expensive.' 'Then tell me about the second best.' This I did and a bright, satisfactory plan it was. 'Is this the plan you want?' 'No, there is another, but it would really be too much. It is the very plan for us, but the lease must be bought, and they ask £1,500; the money would be a dead loss.' 'Very well,' he said in his great resolved way. 'Let it be so, then. I will tell my lawyers to attend to it.' I feel anxious till it is fixed, but nothing will remove from my memory his willingness to do it. Then he went on to say how he thought the homes of the poor *the* one question of the time, and that precisely in proportion as he considered it important was he anxious 'not to come to a smash.' I told him that I thought I saw that we should prevent that, if he would trust us, and he seemed quite ready to do so, only to have wished to say how much he cared. Then he said that, for his part,

he was perfectly content to spare the money, but that if the thing would have paid, it would have more chance of being done on a larger scale. 'I am afraid I don't think that if ours paid others would,' I said; 'I think the thing is to do it perfectly well, and leave the proofs in God's hands,' and Ruskin quite agreed that to do it perfectly was the first thing. Because he wishes it, a great desire to make it pay has seized me, almost a temptation, but it shall only help, not fetter me.

I offered to resign my salary, urging that the house would take so much of my time. 'As you like,' he said, 'but it is yours now, as long as you want it, for you are doing some of the work that I ought to do.' 'I'm afraid I shall always want it, there is so much to do.' 'Then always have it,' he said, with one of his sweetest smiles, setting one instantly at ease. In his speaking of the reasons for giving it, he said that it was partly to enable me to do, and partly not to do the work, that I might keep well and useful.

To M. H.

July 29, 1865

I saw Ruskin, who was very kind and pleased about the houses. My nominal work for him and salary have ceased. I know it will seem all right in time, perhaps better than ever, but it feels so sad now. For ten years and a half I have worked for him, and been so proud of my work, and now it is all over. Old memories of the days long ago come thronging up, of his teaching, of my high hopes of success in the work; of the great sense of rest that income had been, of the thought of our outward link being gone, but I dare trust our friendship to take

care of itself, that the spiritual bond cannot be broken; besides, if it were broken, how slight, how very slight a sorrow this would be beside most sorrows. I am with Miranda, who is the best person to be with when one is sad.

To M. H.

October 22, 1865

I went to see Ruskin—such a triumphant visit, for I had nothing but bright news to tell about the houses, which certainly do progress wonderfully. His sympathy and delight were extreme. Mrs. Ruskin sent a message to me, and I feel that their interest in the matter is very earnest. His confidence was so complete, and seemed so natural and happy, and he offers almost unbounded power of extension, if we see our way to it, but I a little fear to lose in depth what might be gained in surface. We shall see. I have in some wonderful and unknown way gained Mrs. Ruskin's confidence. It may, probably never will, go further; she is too old to make a new acquaintance.

To M. H.

November 5, 1865

I called on Mrs. Ruskin, who was glad to see me. I was presented to the stately, kind, grand old lady, who received me very warmly. She told me many a thing of her long-ago life, of her spinning and sewing, and of her 47 years of married life, during which she had never but once drunk tea away from her husband, of her 9 years' engagement. She asked much about us all, and of our lives and work; of the latter she spoke so beautifully, not one word of vain praise or wonder, but always

of how I could not be thankful enough to God for having put the joy of doing it into my heart—of love as *the* blessing of life, its strength and treasure. She spoke little of Ruskin, much more of her husband. That which touched me most somehow was an indescribable tone of trust and respect with which she treated me; she's very like a queen in her dignity. She is nearly blind, and cannot walk at all, but is quite the mistress and head of the house, knows where everything is and should be, and considers that she takes care of 'Joan,' and not Joan of her. Joan is to come and collect rents with me. She is very sweet and good, and exceedingly interested about the work. She said that her cousin wished her to see the houses.

From J. R.

DENMARK HILL
March 10, 1866

MY DEAR OCTAVIA,

My mother is delighted and interested by your letter in no small degree, and it is very pleasant to me also. She bids me send you another ten pounds. The account of the quarrels and economies of your poor people under just government is very valuable to me.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN

From J. R.

April 10, 1866

MY DEAR OCTAVIA,

I am very glad of your letter—I partly thought I had hurt you—partly that you shrank from me, as many now do—and among them those whom I care most for—because of changes in my modes of thought. I

do not admit mouse and lion theory at all, it is because I am weak, not because I am strong that I am not more with you in all your work.

Write me just a word about Cumberland and the look of it, and some more about Miss Harris.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin

From J. R.

April 21, 1866

My dear Octavia,

I was very sorry only to get that glimpse of you. Quite the happiest days of all my life were passed in my very early childhood, paddling and floating about in un-upsettable boats at the shingly edge of Coniston Waterland; and Derwent Water was always to me a piece of the other world—the passionate elevation of the pleasure being as far beyond anything now possible to me as I suppose mine was above the beasts—I am going abroad to take two children, who have never been, and who will both be very happy. I shall only be so through them; all the strength and life having been taken from me by the destruction of my favourite buildings and scenes, and the death of Turner. All places are like tombs to me (but that Cumberland one would be a sweet country churchyard).

Your visit to my mother gave her great pleasure.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin

To M. H.

April 22, 1866

I had a most successful afternoon at Mrs. Ruskin's. I was there two hours. The breakfast-room, where she

was sitting, had a complete bank of azaleas, rose-colour and white, and through the windows we saw the long dark arms of the cedar, showing bars of gold-green grass between them. When I said how lovely it all looked, she asked if I would like to go into the garden to see a gorgeous bed of tulips, which certainly was lovely. She said that she wanted to hear all about me, if I should not think it rude of her to ask how I managed to do all I had done. I told her a little, but she had to keep recalling me, for you know one becomes more interested in the things than in how one does them. She told me much about her youth. She said rather proudly that she was going to be all alone in Ruskin's absence. She was most warmly, deeply kind to me, and she has his lovely generosity. She gave me a lovely volume of sacred poetry, and £5 for the playground, and £1 for poor Mrs. B., a large cucumber grown in her garden, and she is netting a shawl for me, and each given with a love and joy and humility that were very touching. She will be 85 in September. Her recognition of failing power was touching, but even more her proud independent joy in what she could do. I felt that all earthly things were becoming mere trifles, and that Love became more and more to her. Once in speaking of her husband she said: 'I miss him every minute.'

From J. R.

July 1866

My dear Octavia,

I am *very* glad of your letter and I will not think otherwise than rightly about you in these matters any more, and will receive the full help of your regard

for me. So little can I judge of people that I was quite strongly, at one time, under the impression of your being quite disappointed in me, and withdrawn from me; the reason of this was that my own life appeared so selfish and base to myself as compared with yours, that I thought it must seem so to you also, and that you quite despised me; while I could not tell you, or at least explain to you, the various domestic and personal sorrows of my life, quite different from, or even contrary to any that the public fancy or know of me, which have crippled all my energy, and made me as I thought quite helpless to you. . . . You being able to form no notion could not but I thought look on me as getting *merely* lazy or selfish. I don't let an old friend like you come to me for six months, so it is natural for me to think if you are a little grave when you come that you are hurt and can't care for me any more—however, after this you may be as grave as you like, and I'll never distrust you any more and be very thankful to you.

Believe me, ever affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin

From J. R.

July 27, 1866

My dear Octavia,

Your 'for the best' theory is very pretty and comforting. But when anybody comes to total catastrophe—(as for instance seeing a poor wretch among your wicked children dying of dirt-fever) how do you make out that all is for the best *then*? And if not for them why for *me*? My melancholy and comfortless—but it seems to me reasonable belief—is that out of all

evil comes more and branching evil; out of good more and branching good. Evil is a question of degree observe. I chill myself with a dash of cold water in the morning. I don't like it—but am warmer afterwards. It is *not* evil, but all good. Make the same chill half an hour long—and I should never recover it. *Then* it would be evil. Sorrow which disciplines, and from which one recovers is *not* evil, but good. Sorrow continued long enough to destroy mental and bodily constitution *is* evil and nothing else.

Answer this for I *can't* understand any practical and compassionate person like you thinking things are all for the best.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN

From J. R.

August 14, 1866

MY DEAR OCTAVIA,

My mother got your note to-day and was glad of it. I was heartily glad also to see you were resting. Let me entreat you not to come back to crush yourself with cholera-nursing. It would be wholly absurd and therefore wholly wrong. You know *that* as well as I do, but I fear for the strong helpful instinct—*please don't*, for you would make *me* anxious about you, too, and we have no business either of us to risk cutting off all our plans for a little extra money. Keep to the sea, and let it nurse you with cradle waves.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN

From J. R.

September 3, 1866

I'm particularly happy that my mother has taken to you so; it's very good for her, and gives her a new interest and admiration.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN

From J. R.

September 15, 1866

MY DEAR OCTAVIA,

I think it would be highly desirable that you should give such an account as you propose. I should *like* to read it, but may not be able, and there is no need. State your own views in beginning this thing; say that I furnished you with the means in order to prove and practise one of the first principles of my political economy: that proper use of money would give proper interest, and that no one could otherwise than *criminally* take more. Make the thing short, but put in *some* distinct and interesting stories about your tenants, and I doubt not the immense good you will do, and probably induce others to do.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN

To M. H.

October 4, 1866

I write to tell thee of my bright, happy visit to-day, and its complete success. Somehow they seem to grow better every time. Ruskin brought down his summer sketches, and the work he is doing from them, such lovely sketches of Lucerne and Neuchatel and such

dawn and twilight on the lake, a beautiful one of it, green, with foam-crested waves. And an old Danish botany book, the plates coloured by hand. The book is 100 years old, and was in the royal library. I never saw him so friendly, and we had some rather strange and very interesting talk, and we sat all together, which made it more like an ordinary visit, when one can stay on and talk. We had a long talk about heroes, and how they taught us to look up and whether and what they would be when people in general grew better, thence to questions of faith; and all the struggling hope or longing came out in a pathetic appeal to me. Mrs. Ruskin was shocked, of course, not understanding, and she said, waving her hand to me, 'My friend here would think different people heroes from those you think so.' 'Mother,' he said, 'Octavia and I agree about everything.' I couldn't help being amused at his coming to that conclusion after all, and I laughingly assured her that he didn't usually say so, but quite the contrary. He answered most earnestly, 'Oh no, we can see very little of one another, and when we meet I like to probe all the questions that we may learn from one another; but I never met *any* one with whom I get on as I do with you.'

Once again his mother said: 'John does not believe in the Bible,' and he said very decidedly, 'Oh, don't I?'; and then after a pause, 'Octavia is accustomed to tell me that I do.'

To M. H.

October 14, 1866

The main event of this week has been our expedition to Ruskin's. Florence was very quiet and sympathetic.

Miss Agnew told us that Ruskin had set apart the day for us. Down he came quite like a sunbeam. He asked Joan to take us upstairs, where was a picture of Rossetti's called the 'Golden Water,' from the *Arabian Nights*. I asked the story when we came down, and Ruskin told it, as only he can tell a story. Joan disputed the correctness of his version, so he got the book and read us a passage; it was an inscription on a covetous man's tomb. It was like the most impressive and awful parts of Isaiah, and read like a prophet's warning. He showed us some lovely drawings. We talked about 'Talk.' He said the world made such a din it couldn't hear itself, and we agreed that if people were driven to doing instead of talking, it would be a great gain. This reminded him of Carlyle, and he read a very interesting letter that he had just received from him. He told us a lovely story about an old pilot and his wife at Boulogne, and their love for him because he had given them a prescription that had saved their child, and how he always had to go to see them, etc. Then we saw his Titian, such a grand Doge, grander than mine, and we talked about repression of feeling and its influence on character, when strong real feeling was not frittered away by hurry and expression. Then we went into the drawing-room, and Florence played so beautifully at his special request; the music evidently delighted him much. We saw Mrs. Ruskin, who was very kind. Then Flo and I went up into the mineral room, for two whole hours. I had no idea that the things would be so lovely, and his talk about them was something of which I can give no idea. He brought out drawer after drawer, and specimen after specimen, explained clearly, personified so

tenderly, sympathized with our joy so sweetly. (Florence remembers being so much impressed by his saying: 'Now I'm going to show you the devil,' and he took out a large nugget of gold.) At last it was time to go. The day did me good in more ways than one.

From J. R.

November 9, 1866

My dear Octavia,

It will be all right about the magazine.[1] I must add mine to the many words of praise and thanks which I am sure you will receive for that admirable fortnightly.

Ever afftly. yours,

J. Ruskin

From J. R.

December 2, 1866

My dear Octavia,

I did not at all like to give up the vague chance I had of being with you on your birthday. I shall think of you much, and of the many whose thoughts of you will be more powerful than mine with the Ruler of all things, and Father who sent you to help them.

I should like *much*, for my own sake, to see Miss Harris. Could you bring her out to tea here, any day after Wednesday? With faithful regards to your mother and sisters.

Ever afftly. yours,

J. Ruskin

[1] The *Fortnightly Review*.

From J. R.

KESWICK
August 20, 1867

MY DEAR OCTAVIA,

Both your letters gave me great pleasure. I am thankful you are better.

Giving up the expectation of being happy is a great step towards peace, but not the kind of happiness one used to have when one both expected it and got it.

I *may* ask you to write to my mother on her birthday, she will like it so much, and you will have pleasure in doing it.

I hope, when I get home, to be able to bring some more help towards the management of the houses.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN

From J. R.

September 3, 1867

MY DEAR OCTAVIA,

My mother is entirely grateful for your little line—and I as you must know am very anxious for you. In the briefest words tell me if there is any way in which I can help you. Partly I may do so by seeing your sisters, which I shall speedily do—but I am gravely ill myself, and we must both of us, depend upon that, do very little good at present, if we are to do any more in the future.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN

From OCTAVIA

June 1868

DEAR MR. RUSKIN,

I have been happy all day with my people; it was an unusually successful day there, partly because of the power of planning several things to be done with the five pounds. I have thought a great deal of your visit, and I hope that the sense of your sense of awful incompletion may deepen my own. It is great enough at times, but I dare say I am too apt to dwell too thankfully and brightly on the distinct progress, and compare all too much with what it was, too little with what it should be. And yet there is distinctly in me certainly that intense hungering after the fulfilment of all which is just begun, the vision of what all might be, which comes out more, perhaps, in the prayers I have written for our household here, because in prayer one dares to look at the terrible falling away, and at the perfect order and glory that should be; but there is hardly time in the day's hurry for any but the small duties that lie at hand, except in those rare moments of pause, which are like prayers. The right proportion of patience and impatience is difficult to attain. Your coming was somehow very like a day of judgment, dividing more clearly for me the evil and the good, and I seemed to meet it as one does the thought of all such days, with a certain confidence that in the main I have meant right and worked faithfully, and that the small frail tiny achievements will be accepted, and made part of a great whole; but that any self-satisfaction shall be wholly burnt up, leaving a clearer view of a mightier purpose and higher ideal to be attained. Of my own work it is literally nothing to me what you,

or anyone, or even God, judge it to be; it is usually much best to be wholly ignorant; of its intention, I have no doubt of *that*—He will use it. But I do care, I do desire such searching as shall detect all that is slovenly and lazy and stupid in it, such teaching as shall set before me a high enough standard. The times do come to all of us, when some human voice, some divine voice, or some unlooked-for success has said distinctly to us, 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord,' but I think it is at such moments that we bowed lowest with the sense of how little we have done.

Why are you touched and ashamed? You who have done so much! But I was delighted. Five pounds means a certain definite amount of power to purify, and set in order a little bit of the earth God loves, and made very good; a certain amount of power to say at the moment: 'If you will work there is what will support and reward you.' Then, too, all help means now something coming from God to meet and supplant my own great weakness, all will to help is a something which I feel will do my work when power, and perhaps life, are wholly gone from me—will carry on better things than I have ever dreamed, and will take care of those whom I have loved. You will not forget about the tree, will you? And we very much want creepers; and jessamine and ivy do best in London.

Ever yours affectionately,

OCTAVIA HILL

From J. R.

June 5, 1868

MY DEAR OCTAVIA,

I was touched and ashamed by your joy at getting those five pounds for your workers. I have been

spending enormously lately in minerals and pictures, thinking of making one effort in my own way—but I believe the end will be in your way, not in mine. Keep as well as you can, and let me know when a little gift of money like this will do you service or pleasure.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN

From J. R.

July 8, 1868

MY DEAR OCTAVIA,

I have the book and like it very much, only the reasoning is all based on the idea that large cities must be like ours. They *may* be vast with Christian splendour, greater and more beautiful than even Babylon—and have gardens with green currents through them like the sea at Venice.

Where does Matthew Arnold reproach you with faith in machinery? Please answer this question.

Yours affectionately,

J. R.

To M. H.

January 31, 1869

On Friday Ruskin lectured on Architecture. He is taking to drawing and art work. I cannot but be glad. They are in many ways quiet, interesting, and freer from pain than the details of social work, and for the principles he will never cease to teach us. His lecture was powerful, interesting, and full of great, thoughtful views of life and art, but not touching on those deep questions of feeling, where he is greatest of all. After the

lecture he asked about me, and I told him concisely of our various successes in the houses. He goes to Verona in April, to draw the tombs there, a very great work.

Mr. Maurice is not strong enough to keep both his London and Cambridge work. And so they are going—Maurice and Ruskin, those two men whose presence made London so much of what it is to me; but the dear home remains, and the beloved work, and many friends, and all that these two have given and done. Never did I feel braver or more thankful, or even nearer to them both. Thus often when all that can be taken away is taken, we feel most what can never be taken away.

To M. H.

March 1, 1869

I had a long quiet talk with Ruskin. He is very happy about the houses, and took down many particulars about them, and seemed interested and pleased. We discussed the revival of earnest men's interest in Grecian literature, life and faith. He said that the goddess of the air was always connected with spiritual life and faith. I asked if he looked upon this thought as innate, or communicated, and he seemed to think either or both, but that the important fact was that it came home to men; because the air was necessary for life, and secondly for strength in dealing a blow and thus typical of life and thought.

To M. H.

October 10, 1869

Ruskin told me much of his plans. He says he is going to fight against liberty, irreverence, and egotism. He

wants to keep alive any form of respect left to us from feudal ages; even when the characters of the superiors are not worthy of respect, we must pay respect to the position. He is going to draw up a formula to be a bond of union among those who believe the ground of reform to be honest work. He is drawing such interesting beasts at the Zoological Gardens.

From J. R.

August 30, 1870

My dear Octavia,

I have read your report with great interest, but I would ask your permission to add a few words to it—in order to mark more clearly the principles it involves, which I do not think all its readers would at once see, if it were issued without comment, in its present form. It dwells much for instance on the necessity of more personal intercourse and sympathy with the poor. I acknowledge the need to the uttermost. But the closest intercourse and kindest feelings would be useless without right methods of action; and right methods of action will be always useful—however narrow or unsympathetic the feelings. And these main methods and principles of your work I think you have left unmarked for the general reader. Nay, you have even run some risk of his entirely misinterpreting them.

Your very handling of your report is likely to cause such error. 'Raising the poor without gifts.' You mean without gifts given to maintain them in habits of idleness and base dependence. But your subscription list at the end of your report is a list of gifts—spent in procuring for your poor the best gift that Heaven sends Man—

Employment. And the great principle on which we began our work together, namely, that you should be able to let the poor rooms at a fixed rent, which should never be raised upon them, and which if they continued to pay they were as sure of their house as if it were their own—the landlord engaging himself not to sell the property over their heads at any price, however advantageous to himself, so that they might set about any improvement possible in their dwellings with a good heart, and also on terms which, if I am not mistaken, enabled you to give them two rooms for the rent, which under the pressure exercised on them by ordinary 'supply and demand' rent taking, they had been forced to pay for one. This principle, which is, is it not? for the most part ignored in your late reports, involves, it appears to me, a very considerable amount of 'Gift.'

Again when you speak of raising the poor without gifts you do not mean I suppose to stop the current of charity but to direct that current to the giving of employment. There has been almost an unanimous shriek from the good clergymen of London lately—against alms-giving. I don't know what they now call the Church they belong to; but if that Church has ceased to consider alms-giving as much a duty as prayer-making, it is certainly no longer a Christian one. What they mean, I presume, is what for these ten years I have been vainly trying to get believed—namely, that the first duty of charity is to collect a wages fund, and to employ, compulsorily if needful, all idle persons at a fixed rate of wages, adequate to the maintenance of themselves and their families by wholesome food, and in wholesome lodgings, and to do this in direct contradiction of the

modern stupidity, ineffable as abominable, of leaving wages to be depressed by competition—and filling up the gap to something like level of life maintaining with alms as indiscriminate as the wage paying. *That* is what you mean to prevent, is it not? and that consists in giving what of work you are doing—and succeeding, as you are sure by all the laws of Nature and Heaven to succeed in doing. But that is not 'raising the poor without gifts.' It is raising them by direct and continual gifts, granted to them on condition of their doing daily a certain quantity of useful work—to the systematizing of which you give further the richest gift, your own care, discipline and personal sympathy.

I think if you had put this more clearly before the Social Science Association you would not have found them quite unanimously applausive; but it is at least necessary that it should be clearly stated to the readers for whom this report is prepared.

Forgive the abruptness of my letter. I have these things greatly at heart—and I am so accustomed to hear them denied with obloquy that it startles me to see them in the least ignored in your account of an experiment of which the success—owing as it is in great part—and you know how deeply and gratefully I acknowledge this—to your own zeal and energy—would be ultimately mischievous instead of beneficial, unless the principles on which it is based were for ever true.

Believe me always affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN

Remember I entirely concur in all you say and illustrate of the harm of giving assistance to people who

might get work if they chose. But this Gospel of refusing help to the idle is vain or deadly, unless coupled with the far more necessary one of the necessity of making that idleness cease, by clearly defined direction of labour.

And one or two of your illustrations are not pointed as they should be. The real moral of your story about the doctor's certificate for the wine is—not that people should refuse to give wine on a doctor's certificate—but that doctors should take care for whom they write one.

From J. R.

November 26, 1871

My dear Octavia,

I have been looking over some old letters. I find the enclosed, one of yours written five years ago, which is still of much interest to me. It will not be wasting your time if you tell me, what I am curious to know, whether you *still* think I gained by that pain—or have gained, by variously greater occurring since?

Always affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin

From J. R.

December 1, 1871

My dear Octavia,

There are few people whose opinions I care for on such matters, but you have seen so much of broken life and distorted character, that *yours* is of value to me—I cannot understand how you maintain your faith in *good* coming out of *evil* to the person themselves. Take this case of Rossell, for instance—do you mean that it is good for him to be shot? or that the one fault

of his character, which made him mistake his duty, was given him by the love of God? And if so, do you mean that God loved *him* better than the wretches, whom he tried to bring to some good, and brought only to a death quicker than his own by brandy and fire?—to me the aspect of all things is simply that of the fate of the flies on a summer's day—of whom some are wiser and stronger than others, and escape the housemaid longer, but whom their Maker loves all alike, whether they are snapped up by swallows, or eating my peaches.—Please send me word what you *mean*, at all events, whether you tell me anything of what you speak of as evidence or not.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN

From J. R.

December 23, 1871

MY DEAR OCTAVIA,

Sincere thanks for taking the trouble to write that long letter.

It is very like Mr. Maurice, and to me, a poor moth lying singed under a candle, which, as far as I know, doesn't light anyone—it is all very wonderful. But a nice frame of mind to work in. It will enable you to do much good in future as in the past.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN

I need not wish you many happy returns—you are sure of happiness, and have faith in endless returns.

From J. R.

February 5, 1872

My dear Octavia,

Thanks for the nice long letter. The sum of it, however, is in the wholesome and perhaps praiseworthy habit you have formed of thinking more of what you have been able to do than of what others have been unable, of course also with the faith that what you cannot understand is for the best. Also I am different from you in pitying the undignified more than the dignified. My little dog Wise died of a painful disease; it was long before I would have him poisoned, for he loved me much, and had great joy with me when he was not in pain. But I pitied him in his death more than I should have pitied Hercules.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin

From J. R.

January 30, 1872

My dear Octavia,

This couplet itself expresses a character entirely divine, and therefore almost painfully unlike ourselves.

> 'Never elated when one man's distrest,
> Never dejected when another's blest.'—Pope

But no worthy person could be in extreme gladness while any person he loved was suffering—nor in extreme misery while any one greatly loved was happy. And I have myself now clear enough insight into the suffering of others, even when I do not love them, as to prevent

me from ever being happy. And I have still enough joy in seeing Joanna happy to keep me from feeling myself lost.

I shall have another book for you soon. Love to your sister and Mr. Maurice.[1]

Yours affectionately,
J. R.

From J. R.

January 31, 1872

My dear Octavia,

You are becoming a choice Puzzle to me, like the clouds and the moon. Please give me a word or two more of answer, though I'm very tiresome. Here are two letters, yesterday and to-day's *specimen* letters. The gentleman's I have answered, please read and post my answer. The young lady's (a Bishop's daughter though she can't spell) I have *not* answered.

The sun is shining and the birds are singing, but they have had no begging letters to answer or neglect. I am uncomfortable about both letters. Grant them both written by dishonest people, grant them, which they are, written by fools.—These additional facts do not make me the least more comfortable.

I take these two letters as a type of much more pain. And I know *that* much more to be nothing compared with the universal and *utter* misery about me.

And whatever state my own misery be—I cannot be 'elated.' Can You! really?

Ever afftly. yours,
J. Ruskin

[1] C. Edmund Maurice.

From J. R.

Arezzo
July 24, 1874

My dear Octavia,

I have your nice letters, and in the first place, very heartily congratulate you on what good has happened to yourself, and in the second, hold it for a good happening to me that you can propose to me so advantageous an additional operation at Freshwater Place, and I shall be glad that you immediately complete the arrangement on such terms as you think fit. I am a *little* cheered by what appears to me your naïve hopes; the proper and natural result of great personal success. . . . I solemnly and with all my mind believe that the catastrophe coming on Society cannot now be averted, though I have faith absolute in final victory of what I have taught.

I sometimes think that you are too successful to be quite right! And expect that the Devil has not enough quarrel with you. But long may the pleasure of your own Master go on prospering in your hand.

Ever truly yours,
J. Ruskin

From J. R.

April 9, 1875

My dear Octavia,

I am entirely grateful for your kind letter, which chances to come when I am more than usually depressed and out of courage.

Ashbourne, Derbyshire
July 1875

My dearest Octavia,

I cannot help in this more than with sympathy and good hope. There is no reason for your doubting either of these

in me, for all you have done and are designing—but my work is now, and must be, totally in another kind; not as you put it, that I want perfection, while you are content with the immediate possible—but that while your work is only mitigating of mortal pain, mine is radically curative.—London is as utterly doomed as Gomorrah, that is no reason why *you* should not open a window, or bring a field to give a moment longer breath to her plague-stricken children, but I have to labour wholly to fence round fresh fields beyond the smoke of her torment. I would fain have helped you to get these (Swiss Cottage) fields, because of your own personal love of them, but in many ways, at present, I am helpless.

Thanks—believe me in rendering them not less for all you have done and all you are and that I am.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN

From J. R.

BROADLANDS

11 *Oct.*, 1875

MY DEAR OCTAVIA,

I am deeply interested and deeply grateful for your letter, and it is quite true that I don't enough count influence as a fact in my past life, partly from not seeing it in the things I've tried most for; but chiefly because in painting, or writing, one is apt to estimate work only at its intrinsic value, not thinking what may come of it. My picture or sentence is but a poor thing, or is—if it sometimes is—a rich thing—that is what I have to consider only; not what comes of it. But I shall really count you as one of my jewels hereafter.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. R.

September 24, 1875

My dear Octavia,

I shall read your book with true pleasure—understand, of course, how much your work is your own—but not feeling it therefore—either separate from mine or derived from it, but contributing—mine and yours alike to the stream of the great River of Life.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin

The following letters record a few of Octavia's earliest experiences in the management of tenement houses. The first letter shows how anxious she was to learn what had already been done, in order to prepare herself for the work she was undertaking. The first property that Ruskin bought and placed under her control was Paradise Place, some small cottages near to her home. About a year later he bought Freshwater Place, a narrow court with a piece of waste ground in front of it. Octavia added another story to these cottages and made an outside staircase as an approach, leading to a balcony on to which the rooms opened. He also bought a large house in the Marylebone Road with a cottage at the back, which opened on to the waste ground, and in which a caretaker was lodged. Octavia let the house in tenements, reserving a large room for night classes, and to be used in the daytime as a women's work-room in connection with a scheme for relief.

The waste ground was enclosed and laid out as a playground, under great difficulties, owing to the rough and uncivilized state of the neighbourhood. Ruskin gave trees and creepers, and sent his own gardener to see to the planting. During school-hours the tenants used the playground as a drying ground. For twenty-one years a May Festival was held there, and not only the tenants enjoyed it, but the people in all the neighbouring houses, who used to come to their windows, and even climb on the roofs to see the flowers and dancing and to hear the band.

While it was uncertain what tenement property could be acquired, Octavia consulted Mr. Harlow, the landlord of 14 Nottingham Place, and the Secretary of the Marylebone Association for Improving the Dwellings of the Working Classes; but the search was quite unsuccessful.—E. S. M.

October 16, 1864

I went with Mr. Harlow to see his Model Lodging Houses, in which I was much interested. The appliances are excellent and the good will perfect; but alas, the condition simply bore out my belief that appliances are almost worse than useless without energy, and energy is often not to be found among the poor. It needs supervision, which can only be given by a friend. Thence I went to the Sec. of the Marylebone Association for Improving the Dwellings of the Working Classes. A friend of mine told me of four houses to let in a street which, from its awful state, is called 'Little Hell.' The Association has bought and cleaned eight of these houses, and they pay. We went to see them. I was delighted. We went to the four which are for sale, and more awful abodes for human beings I never entered.—The stairs broken, the walls bulging and tumbling, the dirt, the darkness, the utter absence of all attempt at ventilation. There was a mere scrap of ground too small for our use.

After the purchase of Paradise Place, as Octavia could not at once take possession, she hired a room where she could hold classes for her future tenants. There was one of the cottages, however, of which she obtained possession before the others, and she thus describes her first visit.—E. S. M.

To M. H.

The tenants expect me to do so many things. They seem to respect me so deeply because I have bought

the houses. It makes me almost shudder to see what a mighty power money has. I feel a deeper law binding me to a sense of their inalienable rights.

To M. H.

I want the tenants to feel, above all things, that, as I hope to help them, I am perfectly conscious that the only way to do this is through awakening in them a deeper sense of their own duties, as in us a deeper sense of ours. Such worn, haggard, careworn women cringing down to me, who have never suffered and struggled as they have without teaching or help, deadened to all sense of order or cleanliness and self-respect. 'My friends,' I feel inclined to say to them, 'don't treat me with such respect. In spirit I bow down to you, feeling that you deserve reverence, in that you have preserved any atom of God's image in you, degraded and battered as you are by the world's pressure. But God is mightier than that world, my friends, and He, Who has kept in you whatever grace remains to you, has put it into our hearts to come among you, to help you to struggle with the pressure of these enemies of yours and ours. Take us in as part of your nation; take us in as fellow-workers on God's earth. Let us try if together we cannot make it a little fairer place for His children's dwelling.

To M. H.

I ought to tell thee of my week's labours, but they are some way too sad, full of hope as they are. We have been taking possession of one house, and have had to clear it

in order to have it cleaned, and, to do this, we have turned out the bad old tenants, in spite of tears and prayers. Perhaps I ought not to have been able to do this. I went over the emptied house with builder, surveyor, sweep and broker, such a ludicrous train! thou wouldst have laughed to see me stalking about with the great rusty keys of the desolate rooms, and a newspaper parcel of rent, £13 in silver, under my arm. But the smile would have faded from thine eyes couldst thou have seen the rooms where human beings had just lived. I could not, even in speaking, describe the dirt and closeness. I think I should have fainted in one room had not Mr. Stokes quickly stepped forward and thrown open the closely shut windows. But the tears in thine eyes would have come still faster, if thou couldst have seen the drunken widow, who awaited me at the door, her four children, ragged and miserable, entreating to be taken back to the house which she had kept in that state, and how the hope died out of her eyes as she saw all the men of business with me, and how she fell back without even uttering the request she had made in the morning. I was so weary and sick at heart, but went to hear MacDonald lecture, which did me good.

To M. H.

Last evening it was really very satisfactory; the workmen have finished No. 3, and the people were taking possession of their *two* rooms, every corner of the house having been thoroughly cleaned, and old mess cleared away, and windows perpetually open; and we having placed a ventilator at the top of the staircase. The house

felt like one belonging to a different class of people. Then there is no overcrowding, and there was such a sense of relief in seeing the families that had huddled into one room expand into two. The change had given them heart and hope, and all sorts of touching efforts at adornment had been made; pictures from the *Illustrated News* stuck on the walls, new bright coloured blinds. Mrs. S. had produced some bright crimson curtains that she had possessed for two years, but feared to put up before, because of the dirt; there were many most anomalous things that one felt were more in need of attention, but *Aurora Leigh* has brought clearly before me that one must work from above, and feed the spirit if one is to purify the body. The other house, of which we have not yet taken possession, was a great contrast. The bed filled up nearly all the space in the Philips's room. It was so touching; the boy, who is an invalid, had a little thrush in such a low, small cage. A cabman had caught it, and then exclaimed, 'Now I've got it I don't know what to do with it.' Philips had said, 'I'll give you 2d. for it. My boy will be glad of it.' So poor James had reared the little thing, feeding and tending it, and now it is learning to sing. They are afraid to hang the cage outside in the sunlight, it is so rickety. The little bird in the cage was a strange parallel to the boy in his small room, to his soul in its frail body, and that there it should learn to sing was still more touching. I am trying to send the child into the country.

I know that *my* house will soon be dirty again, without almost superhuman efforts, but these we must try earnestly to get the people to make. I do hope we have rescued them from two evils forcibly brought before

me—overcrowding, and a tyrant vixen of a landlady (unless I turn into that, Mary). Mrs. Pegler had further heated her room by lighting a fire, and washing all her children's clothes up there. I asked why she did not use the wash-house, and she replied: 'Them as lived at the top of the house never had used it. The landlady was in and out, and so very abusive that they would rather ask nothing from her.' On Thursday evening we took the children in a boat. It was such a joy, the pale faces flushed and sent flashing smiles of delight. They came back loaded with treasures, feathers, sticks, leaves, clover, etc. Mrs. Pegler said George was 'so proud he'd never been in a boat before.' This was the first word of child sympathy I had heard from that oppressed woman.

To M. H.

We do so want to plant the little railed spaces in front of the houses, and specially to put creepers there. The women have cared so much for the idea, and I think it may be a permanent joy to them, and give them a sense of progress to watch the creepers climb higher on the walls. Everything is difficult to get here, and I like to feel these outward links with thee, and to owe to thee the joy of looking at the long bright sprays. Sometimes I am oppressed with a sense of injustice in having brought the Virginian creeper to so different a fate from its companions, and it almost looks reproach at me; then I am sure, a minute afterwards, that if it has a soul it must be thankful and content, because it gives so much joy. I don't know which set of people it is hardest to touch; but I think life touches more than words, when

people are fallen very low; in fact, I have a considerable contempt for words, except when used by a poet such as Ruskin or a prophet like Mr. Maurice. The might of silence and right action I believe to be immense; and yet how much one has owed to words.

To M. H.

I went to invite the Paradise Place tenants' children to a party here. We are going to have a Christmas-tree. Oh, the rooms were so dreadfully dirty, close, and ill arranged, and untidy, and crowded. One family touched me most. The mother and father were out, and five children left at home, the eldest only eleven. She was vainly trying to clean the dirty faces and awful room; a bright quick child, whom I know I shall like. I feel as if I hardly knew what to appeal to to raise these people, there is something so fallen in all around them. I don't quite know how to nerve them to self-help and decency. Well, we shall see.

To M. H.

I had to follow Florence to the Zoological Gardens, where she had taken 18 poor children; such a work, but we were so happy. I was much touched at my children's love for me. I had no idea of it. Poor little things, if thou could have seen us, such a troop! The children with torn dresses revealing *such* petticoats, hats all bent and broken, cloaks fastened with pins all twisted round. I had one child clinging to each arm, one grasping each hand, and fourteen clustering round,

eagerly treading on one another, struggling to listen and to see. There is indeed work to be done before they are in order.

To M. H.

As to me, I am almost overcome with a sense of thankfulness for the work in Paradise Place, and feel quite young when I am planning what we will make of it all in the years to come, and how we shall watch the children grow up, and think that perhaps we shall see them grown women returning to make better homes than they knew as little children, and how the old associations will gather round them, and how succeeding sets of our Nottingham Place pupils will be bound to these by inherited work and a history. Then my dreamings are interrupted by the thought of how little the future may shape itself according to my dream, but I think that any one step in a work of love is something gained, and that however that wonderful future may be, all my blessed past and blessed present is sure to make a blessed future. I had a delightful talk with Mr. Maurice.

To M. H.

The work in the new houses at Freshwater Place is at present very dreary. The mere business takes so much time that I have little left for friendly intercourse. The tenants have besieged me with requests, most of which I am unable or unwilling to grant; they seem to feel that I am strict, in fact they say so, and two of them have left. The rents have not been the difficulty, but the

control and the sense of rule. Then the awful wickedness is appalling. Still I have to keep up my heart and hope that all will go better presently. Outwardly the place is like a purified, redeemed land. What I long for specially is time, a much gentler manner, and a certain power of teaching and influencing; as it is, a powerlessness comes over me, when I might say so much. I think it is partly owing to a confused notion of duty, for, mingled with the longing to teach, I have a strong belief that deeds speak more clearly than words, and that we have made great mistakes from believing that we have to manage and direct the poor. I believe that God is speaking to them more deeply than we can, and that we have mainly to take care to remove all obstacles to their living nobly, and to welcome all right actions.

I fancy I must err in setting the right before people too harshly, stern with the thought of their possible rejection, instead of confident and glad in the hope that they will turn to it and cling firmly to it for ever. Many people I fail to touch and lead, and am powerless even to make them feel that I love them.

To M. H.

Every moment of working time my whole thought has been of the playground in Freshwater Place, and every second of spare time has been spent there. It is indeed an almost desperate undertaking, and whether we shall really succeed with it is still most doubtful, only if it can be made to answer by any power I have, it *shall*, for the difficulties that impede it only prove the need of it. The people are indeed as low as I have ever seen,

wild, dirty, desperate, full of bitter passions and jealousies and imaginations. The wall that we have been building round the ground has been advanced so far with the greatest difficulty, bricks stolen in the night, broken and thrown about by day, but it was slowly rising until Thursday, when I went round and found the place, instead of being a crowded mass of people begging, shouting, playing, was quite deserted, and there lay the wall one tumbled mass of ruin. A bitter hopelessness filled my heart. I cannot tell you how I had worked and hoped; but with the need came the determination, if not the hope, and vigorously I set to work to repair the evil.[1] Now, again, I have left it, having worked and thought of it incessantly. I have resolved not to go near there to-day. I can do no good, and as we are to have our opening meeting there on Tuesday I must keep quiet or I shall be unfit for it.

To M. H.

May 13, 1866

Mr. Llewelyn Davies is coming and dear Mr. Maurice told me he should come, unless he is at Bath, and numbers of friends will help to entertain the children. Seventy tickets are issued and the responsibility is very great. We are to have a Maypole, flags, singing, and we hope a band from the Boys' Home, and all in the midst of a dense population of people, who break and destroy and steal, and heave stones, and bricks, so that one feels as if living in old times, when all things were

[1] We employed a watchman for the following nights.

decided, not by right, but entirely by might. Three times have I been to the police-station, and many times for a policeman, but really, it has been with very little effect. What has been far more effectual has been the sympathy and good feeling of the few women from there, who come to the work-class, and that of the many children who came to the tea. I have been on the ground early and late, and have seen much of the lives of the people; such lives! If you could have seen them yesterday when we were distributing tickets, such awful dens of darkness as we penetrated, narrow, filthy, dark places, winding stairs, where light never comes, three, four, and five children and their parents living, of course, in one room only; oh, but such rooms! And the children! their eyes all inflamed with continued dirt, their bare feet, their wild cries, their disordered hair, and clothes looking as if dogs had torn them all round, and carried off great jagged pieces. The thought of all this haunts me. There is a poor dejected girl, whom they call Margates, half-witted, they say, and an orphan—one of five. She wanders over dirt-heaps all day, without shoes or stockings, looking so vacant, scolded and rated by everyone, long locks of hair falling over her wild eyes. We were conducted round the court by a girl belonging to our work-class, with a faded green shawl held under her chin and just over her head, such a queer, silent, dirty guide, but very faithful and capable. In one house we were met by a frantic Roman Catholic, who raged and raved at us; he would cut the flesh off the bones of any belonging to him who came near us; for he belonged to the old-established church of the Blessed Heart of Jesus, not Luther's Church, nor Henry VIII. Nothing

has been such a refreshment to me as the ferns, all in tenderest, loveliest green, which greet me when I come in, and tell me of thee. Great success at P. P.[1] The old feud between S. and C. had broken out and raged wildly. I urged friendly Christian feeling, never thinking to prevail, and at last to my amazement I have succeeded!

To M. H.

No one can imagine the awfulness of the dirt and disgustingness of the children. It will be over some day. Yet when I see their joy, and reflect from what they are being kept, it seems to me a thing for which I shall rejoice all my life. I have just engaged a very gentle, truthful woman to be in the playground all the time that it is open. I don't know that she has firmness enough to manage the children, but she will be honest and quite true to me. I have been very unhappy about the state of the ground during the hours that I am not there. I shall be able to rely on her evidence. Yesterday, I set all the children to make small flags out of old bright coloured stuff, and cut out the letters of their names for them to sew on; their joy was intense; hour after hour passed, and they seemed never to weary. Then I hired an organ-man to come in, and the children's joy was over-flowing. The whole ground was covered with tiny dancing figures; each child danced alone a step rather like a jig; if you could but have seen the beaming smiles on the pale dirty faces, and the little bare legs moving so merrily, it would have done you good. Think of the refreshment of going to see Watts after such a time.

[1] Paradise Place.

To M. H.

I had four hours at the playground. It always feels like so many years. We played at trap a great deal, and I was pleased to find that the children, when once started and interested in a game, have now arrived at the point of continuing it themselves. Mrs. Simeon, the woman I have engaged to be there, is quite angelic in her nature. She makes me quite ashamed by the noble motives that she sets before the children, and the entire rightness of her perception about things. She is quite softening that little band of children. There was a rebellion on Wednesday, and they refused to go out at 8 o'clock, when the ground ought to be closed. She called their mothers, who dragged them out, and she was warned that the next day they meant to 'pay her out,' and that she had better look out. Instead of which, they urged her to come to the concert at 7 p.m., as they had heard me invite her, and she'd better not miss an hour. They would all go home early because they'd 'behaved so bad on Wednesday.' I was much struck, too, when she was telling me about some cheating that had gone on about the tickets, that at once she spoke of the importance of removing the temptation from the children, and saw that their deceit was what mattered, not the pence. The children often throw balls over into neighbouring yards, and are sometimes frightened about going to ask for them. Yesterday a ball went over, and the children eagerly counted 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. 'It's at No. 5,' they exclaimed with relief and joy, and the thrower ran off at once to ask for the ball. One of the little girls said to me with such depth of grateful feeling, 'Oh, she's such a kind

woman at No. 5, we don't mind going a bit.' I felt how much quiet, almost heroic, goodness there was (that was never heard of) down in those courts, and a sudden vision of the busy, overworked woman, whose gentleness was such a blessing to the children, rose before me. I thought that I would rather have deserved the children's grateful confidence than have established the playground three times over. I knew that in this world I should never deserve it. Again, a little girl, whom I had warned again and again, ran across the ground where we were playing trap. She fell, and somehow an elder one stepped on her arm and hurt her. Mrs. Simeon was shocked at the elder child's carelessness and cruelty. Directly she took that tone, I saw that she was right, but I should never have thought of it. I only thought the little child silly for coming in the way. So I learn in silence many things down there.

To M. H.

Undated

I really believe that the playground is going to make a start at last. Miss Cowie, a bright, young, strong daughter of a School Inspector, brought an equally strong, bright friend to help. Miss C. takes to the playground, and manages beautifully. Oh, we had such a successful afternoon there! quantities of spirited boys, and such fine games. She is going every Saturday afternoon, and I in the morning. She will take our tenants' singing-class and set Miranda free. She will learn Kindergarten songs and games, and help with clothes. Then Mr. P. is going to teach our band of rough boys to play on pipes and drums.

In 1869 Octavia was asked to take the management of several houses in B. Court, the terrible conditions of which she describes in the following letters. After a time there was such a marked improvement in the court that friends came forward and purchased many more of the houses, in some cases rebuilding them as Model Dwellings, so that practically the whole court came under Octavia's management. This work, carried on by faithful workers, has become the centre of good and happy domestic and social life in the neighbourhood. E. S. M.

To M. H.

B. Court is something beyond expression awful. In an underground kitchen (opening only to an area which is used as the sole receptacle for rubbish, ashes, and nameless dirt, an area which is not three feet wide, I think, and roofed with a grating covered with old furniture yet further darkening the kitchen) live five people! The scenes are perfectly indescribable. I am there almost daily now, and it makes me very sick. However, I hope to get at least a little done towards cleansing very soon. Lucy Harrison is going weekly to see to a bath that we have made for the children at F. W. Place. I am going to give a set of little tea-parties to my tenants there, inviting only the grown-up people from one house at a time. Our first party was a capital success. We had it in my class-room at Marylebone Road. I thought it would look cheerless, but no, it looked nice. A fire and gas made it quite cheerful. We took a white cloth and a glass of flowers, and made a fender of loose bricks, which looked quite pretty. Minnie and I were the only entertainers, and we had such a nice time. The people talked so nicely about work, wages, emigration,

and our adventures while away. The men came hardly cleaned for the occasion, or rather in their working clothes. I have three fields of work opening before me. First, my drawing, by which alone I earn. Second, the houses, not only the quiet gradual life among my own tenants, which can hardly be called work, but the advising and planning and directing other houses. Third, the organization of relief, and training workers.

To M. H.

The people, oh, the people! How the memory of them haunts me. I am thankful to be once more quietly down among them. If I seize all opportunities of pause in other occupations, I do learn what may last a long time. Such a night as last night—four hours at B. Court and F. Place—the rain pouring in torrents, the people depressed by it, and worse than usual. Such stories! Such lives! Such sights!—Ah! the river of life should come in large waves to cleanse us from such deathly corruption.

To M. H.

I had such a visit to B. Court on Monday night. It would be impossible to mention the habits of the people. Their masterless condition is to me very pitiful. The front doors are open day and night, and the yards, stairs, and passages are the haunts of the lowest in human form I have met with. I have to go at night to collect the rents; it is so awful groping about the pitch-dark stairs, surrounded by such people, with only thin walls

to hide their hideous deeds, and to go down into those foul kitchens, dark by day and at night only lighted by tallow candles at best, revealing heaps of dirt and disorder, the windows nailed down for fear of pilferers when the owners are absent, the stagnant air loaded with tobacco smoke.

I took the B. Court people to Woodford. I feared to leave them a minute. They were all of a class so low as to be quite amazed and delighted, at the end of the day, to find that they had not got drunk. Our thankfulness was extreme, but that theirs should be so was curious. We feared, all day, they would wander off to the public-house. All went beautifully, but the responsibility was great. I hope to take the rest of the B. Court people to Wimbledon to Lady Ducie's, and the old tenants to the MacDonalds'. I do so long for thee to know all my new people, poor and rich.

To M. H.

Friday was an awful day. I went to the auction at which the land was to be sold. Mr. Shaen[1] came down to give final directions in a room filled with clerks and clients, but something in his face seemed to send me on my way with a blessing. It was a strange scene, almost woeful in the thought of the wild wandering from any principles of justice or order. Here, I kept thinking, is the principle of competition in its outcome and completeness. Can it be said for it just this, that the keen, intense gaze of each man for himself does discover

[1] William Shaen, of Shaen & Roscoe, helped Octavia voluntarily with all her law business.

most accurately what a thing is indeed worth? No, a thousand times no, I was obliged to say. Here are repeated instances of two houses, the same in size, construction, condition, position, selling for sums varying enormously within five minutes of one another. The effect must surely be to destroy any sense of security in anything being worth anything. No wonder there are wild panics, when property can be dealt with in this way. Finally, I came to the conclusion that where temptation is very strong there ought to be *no* division of labour; it would be enormously difficult for men, habitually buying and selling, where conflicting interests ran high, to avoid the perception of certain results from certain actions not strictly fraud. It is very mean to shirk our degrading work and give it to others, and cultivate a hot-house honour, humility, truth, graciousness; let us each, as far as we can, do our most dangerous work, and bring to bear on it whatever strength of moral power we acquire in other fields of work. No one walking in other fields could, for a small gain, condescend so low. I have often felt the same about harshness, suspicion, and hopelessness, which creep over those dealing habitually with a very low class in bad big towns. It needs a highly educated person to preserve gentleness, faith or height of standard. Well, we got two plots of land very sufficiently cheap. Now we may rest on our oars a little.

I went to the Vestry Hall to see the Inspector of Nuisances about those dreadful houses at one end of our court. I am much impressed by his being so struck by the improvement in the court. I asked if they were going to compel the proprietors to put these houses in order.

He said they were now under notice to whitewash, etc. 'But what about extensive repairs?' I asked. 'Ah, that's just it; the owners haven't the money, and what can we do? Is there no hope that you will buy them?' 'No,' I replied, 'not at the present price; but if I bought, would the parish allow me to enclose a small space for a yard?' 'Miss Hill,' he said, 'I speak unofficially, but it is my belief that the parish would let you do anything you like, if only you would buy those houses.'

A Reminiscence from A. C., *a former Nottingham Place Pupil*

Undated

There was a class of rough girls in B. Court. We taught them songs, and told them stories and recited poetry, as we sat by the fire in the winter. I went regularly. Miss Octavia felt it so important for the girls always to find someone there. I shall never forget one evening when I went alone. There was a little crowd at the entrance to the court. I heard a man swearing and a woman screaming; he was holding her by the hair and striking her. I appealed to the men who looked on to interfere, but one of them said, 'We dursn't; he fights for money, and a kick from him would lame you for life.' I thought the poor woman would be killed. I sprang into the ring, and seized the savage's nearest arm, and said with tears, 'Please stop.' He was startled, he turned and hit, not me as I expected, but one of the men for not telling him that 'the little lady' was coming. 'It's one of the ladies what sings to the gals.'

The crowd dispersed, the man slunk away, the woman

was taken home, and the mother of one of the girls said that 'Miss October 'Ill and her young ladies weren't afraid of nothing nor nobody. The grown-ups often stood outside to listen to the singing.' Those were very happy evenings. Miss Octavia was so careful in her choice of songs. When a fine air was wedded to inferior words she would substitute other words.

To M. H.

October 25, 1874

Mr. Smale is going to B. Court to take the lead in the teetotal cause. It was very touching and very beautiful to see him take the pledge. He looked so young and so good, and he took it wholly for the sake of the people. The speeches of the men from the teetotal club, 'The Dauntless,' were very beautiful. I never heard anything straighter from the heart, nor saw more living fire burning in men's eyes. We have begun to have a series of entertainments, admission by payment. Last Saturday opened with a capital play by the MacDonalds. The room was crowded to overflowing. The next performance will be an operetta by Mrs. Baylis[1] and her friends. I am going to be down in the court every Saturday night to help about collecting savings. I must watch these entertainments very closely, and I may as well be doing something at the same time. It is absolutely necessary for me to be there now Miss Cons has gone. It is all I can do to keep things straight, but I am so well I feel up to anything.

[1] Sister of Emma Cons, mother of Miss Baylis, manager of the 'Old Vic.,' the Victoria Hall, Southwark.

To M. H.

December 2, 1875

I am sitting alone; by a curious accident being disengaged, on the evening before my birthday; and something impels me strongly to write to thee. How strangely memories of the past years rise up in connection with anniversaries, suggesting all the changes that passing Time has brought, and all that he cannot bring. The eternal things all safe from the power of destruction seem sometimes the most precious of all. And again, as one thinks of the marvellous growth he has brought that seems to be prized still more. As to what he takes away, of which people talk so much, they seem to me only the outside things, which, however lovely, however dearly loved, are not the essence of what we cared for. The essential thing that they meant is ours, if only by the old promise: 'He shall bring all things to your remembrance.' How, to-night, they come floating up clear and distinct across long years, loves, hopes, and joys of long ago, passion, and pain, with the clearer sight of what they meant, and why they came. Amongst the many memories how thy image looms prominent. How little I have been able to do for thee, while thy love has wrapped me round like sunshine, encouraging me to break through the shell of reserve that had grown over me, and lightening and gladdening me.

How the times are changed since thou brought me those chrysanthemums and Ruskin brought *Aurora Leigh*. Well, they will change, I suppose, on and on till the end; but He Who governs them changes not, nor will He change, so they will continue to be a blessing.

PART III

THOUGHTS AND ASPIRATIONS

QUOTATIONS GATHERED FROM VARIOUS LETTERS

THERE is no separation between God's children. They are bound together in Him. Our outward eyes may not see them, as they never could their souls, but they are with us, and God is with them. Neither are we alone in sorrow. There is One Who has suffered, because there was a Father of spirits caring for all. This sweet Spring weather tells us how all has slept that it may burst into nobler, fuller life. Truly all life shall rise again, truly shall we love more and more.

* * * *

My only notion of reform is that of living side by side with people, till all that one believes becomes livingly clear to them.

* * * *

The angel truly descends that he may bring light, or life, or joy, but still only as a messenger; while men, having their wills brought into perfect harmony with God's will, must enter into all sorrow before they can destroy it; for if angels are strong, men are stronger. The angel bears a flaming sword to root out evil, and healing power; but man has sympathy for his own strong weapon, destroying evil by cherishing good. If men's hearts have longed for something afar from the scene of sorrow, they have longed still more for someone who should share with them their sorrow, death, doubt, and feel with them, and lead them to a truer trust at last. That longing prayer was answered once fully for all; but it is our highest work to let our lives, if clouded, as

all are more or less, be a continual interpretation of that glorious life, which gathers up and unites them.

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When the dear old world has passed away, and we awake after our sleep, we shall doubtless see in the work that lies before us the unfinished threads of that we were doing here, and, in the rest, the best fulfilment of our best visions of spiritual rest. But now we have little to do with these glorified continuations further than to trust that they will *be*, and that they will be far better than we can dream. We must just go on sowing our seed here, not wondering if tares come among it, and believe that there is One Who will thoroughly purge His floor at last, gathering the wheat into His garner and burning it up, as Mr. Maurice showed me long ago, to be a blessing promised to us that our chaff should be burnt in unquenchable fire.

* * * *

There is something eminently delightful in the sight of human joy, whether it be the buoyant youthful lightness of heart and brightness of hope, or the triumphant joy in the noble fulfilment of a noble and pure hope; or the quiet indestructible joy of trust in God, while all you love fades from you—unsearchable on earth save in thought; or while one blessing after another pours upon you and you say, 'It is from our Father.' Inwardly one blesses the joyous person, and says, 'Shine on, a sun upon God's earth.'

* * * *

No human being can be a good machine, being intended to be something better. It is very strange. I try so hard to be contented and satisfied with what God gives; and when I am, I reproach myself with having tried to feed on husks, and call them grain. Perhaps I ought to see that they are by no means husks. Perhaps it is right to rejoice, and yet to look clearly beyond, and see that there is a better treasure which God may give or withhold.

* * * *

I am so happy, I feel as if I must say with St. Elizabeth, in *The Saint's Tragedy*,[1] 'The world has lost her gray sad hue, and blazes with her old life light.'

When people feel this exaltation in the contemplation of the great souls that move about the dear earth, they can understand how the Redemption, the great Salvation, must be given in the revelation of a *person*; how much more powerful the knowledge of such intense beauty must be, than any moral law, or pervading influence, or vast, vague, and consequently incomprehensible power.

I don't mean that I can comprehend all the glory of those whom I reverence and love, but I *can* feel that there are links in the chain of sympathy that bind us together, that there are perhaps steps by which I may one day approach them.

* * * *

On such days as this I can hear the call of the angels leading us upwards, even occasionally catch a glimpse of the gleam from their white wings, which may bear

[1] Charles Kingsley.

us nearer to the sun. God knows if we must wait till we have wings of our own, or whether those of others shall support us on our long flight; perhaps both; perhaps the growth of wings, like love, reverence, beauty, truth, depends on the contemplation of them in others.

* * * *

What is great enough for joy? Not the earth, nor the sea, nor the sky. There seems more to me in the heart of a buttercup, but even *there* there is not enough. Perhaps in Heaven it must be so, for else how does joy exist? I think Heaven and people's eyes must be alike in *that*, for there is room for any amount of joy in *them*. This seems to me likely, for is not Heaven's highest characteristic the perfect communion of souls? Even self-sacrifice, glorious as it is, is most so when it leads to the 'Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit,' because that spirit was one with the Father. Surely all real sympathy is one of the most precious things in the Heaven which is about us, and is prepared for us! And looking into the eyes of those we love, we enter into that communion most fully.

* * * *

Is it not beautiful to watch the growth of souls and spirits, especially when they first seem to spring forth? To see the dull eyes shoot forth glances of intelligence, as if the spirit became conscious of many beautiful existences, to see the heavy head raised, the whole body become more self-controlled, to see the struggle, the wild, questioning glance, as if the powers of perception were not strong enough to keep pace with the eagerness

of the spirit. This spirit will rise into God's own sunlight and live there free and obedient.

* * * *

If you believe that gold, be it hundreds or millions of pounds, can close in any measure the gap that is between men, and that those who have a right to sympathy can be satisfied with money; if you dare to believe that man can discharge his debt of love, or pay it in other coin, then your heart shall grow hard indeed, and England shall have cause to curse you, and the true, brave, loving spirits shall heal the breach without you, and you shall be left utterly alone.

* * * *

Singing is such a complete way of pouring out all which is too strong, too deep, and sad and joyous to be kept all to oneself, and then music seems to take away loneliness. Oh, the relief of singing—the glorious triumphant joy of singing sometimes! The wretchedness of wanting to sing when you can't. The thrill of joy in mingling your voice with one whom you admire and love, the feeling of harmony, almost union. How many things does one say in song that must else burn with terrible fierceness.

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We are bound to use all power of enjoyment as much as we can, provided no duty is left undone.

* * * *

It has seemed to me that it is an often forgotten truth,

and not a superstition, that outward objects and events are all connected with inward life, that they are meant to be connected with it, that they are meant to be illustrations, and even interpreters of it. But that the belief has been discarded by many people, because its adherents have exalted the sign above the fact signified. This faith has, however, been very precious to me, and much that I think and say can only be understood when it is acknowledged. This faith has filled the whole world with treasured memories of past hours, messages from absent friends, and made a language of symbols to be interpreted only by a knowledge of events. Weather, water, earth and sky seem to harmonize with events in a way truly wonderful. Associations of flowers with people are not mere recollections, but in some way or other the flower interprets the person. So the celandine seems to typify that pure joy which receives God's sunlight gratefully, and is in turn a star itself.

* * * *

How true are Mrs. Browning's words:

> 'Thou knowest that thy universe is large;
> Two little tears suffice to cover all.'

But we must gaze steadily through the tears at the universe till it becomes, not large only, but dear to us.

* * * *

I often think and see how much poetry might be to workers, bound continually to material things till they feel almost crushed by them. It is a great pleasure

to be taken into a world of beauty, and the music of poetry is very delicious.

* * * *

Never serviceable work was done by man or woman, except by following earnestly the work before them.

* * * *

I watched the sunset. Oh, it is not true that nature touches me too deeply for me to bear it, as I have often said, and tried to believe, when I could not see it. A sky of infinite purity and depth and palpitating colour, the dying softness of the last notes of some pathetic song, the wonder of some world of science first opening to me, the silence of a far-away wood in the evening, the strength of a strong intellect showing great wonders to one, or the joy after victory, the strength in time of weakness, the unexpected letter, coming when one is worn out or has fought a hard battle, the perception of purpose when all had seemed confused, the presence of a friend when loneliness has oppressed one—all these can only gain certain glory when they break in on a life of hard duty.

* * * *

It is when we are ready to sacrifice things that we prize them most. Why, I do not know, unless it be because God wills that we should care for His gifts much, and, having brought our spirits into union with His, we are given power to prize His treasures.

* * * *

Disappointed hopes come shadowing our brightest moments, filling earth with a pathos not its own, but withal helping us to understand the true sorrows on earth, leading us upward, with strong desire, to that land where we shall reap in joy, making us listen to the notes of sadness that lie beneath all earth's harmonies, teaching us that verily God is the highest good, after which we blindly feel; until we know Him thoroughly, the desire of our soul cannot be satisfied.

I think we should not weigh results. Our measures of them are often very false. Little out-of-sight deeds, perhaps mere silences, slight touches of right feeling, in unobserved moments of trial, really weigh more with God, as greater acts often than the largest, or even as good people measure.

* * * *

After all work is what it *is*, not what we think it, and it can remain to be judged in higher courts than ours—higher and juster; but far more exacting and strict, to which, therefore, we ought to bring our day's and our year's work to be tested—frequently measuring for ourselves where it falls short, or errs. If we carry all *there*, we shall care little for men's judgment, except as it throws light on facts.

* * * *

You once said that you believed that love of family and friends and of nation was an extended form of selfishness. You surely meant that we might feel what we call love for all these, in a selfish spirit, but that love can

be identical with selfishness is to me impossible; or that it is impossible to love friends, nations, mankind generously I cannot believe. Self-sacrifice must be radically opposed to selfishness; and the only *love* deserving the name is always capable of sacrifice; and indeed of sacrifice of even the loved one. Perfect friendship, perfect benevolence, perfect patriotism, and surely perfect marriage, would prove their best right to the title by being willing to give up the beloved, and by calling up such a spirit as should render the loved Society willing to sacrifice itself.

* * * *

If I did not feel how the principle of sacrifice is involved in the idea of noble friendship I could not care for friendship half so much.

* * * *

Something there is in all of us which exists through all we may do, which does not change. All things may be done purely, which seem as though they must degrade; things may be done so willingly and cheerfully, so well, that, though they are unpleasant, and more, they shall still leave our souls as refined as ever.

* * * *

I did not mean to speak despisingly of riches or position. I feel how precious they are, ever fraught with power, not only to help directly, but to gather around their possessors the means of reading the lessons written in the world itself, in books, pictures, music, which may in time again pour themselves forth in ever fresh forms,

fitted for reaching and raising the hearts of the outcast and ignorant. Dare I ignore the value of that which we all possess in a degree? Is not our every treasure a species of wealth? Shall I say that possession has any power to destroy sympathy? Is not God stronger than *that*? Must I throw away my own material wealth—books I have loved, etc.—because I believe that God cannot keep my heart warm and open if I prize His gifts? I would have people cling, with all their strength, to the things they have, and prize them, while willing to give them up, but valuing them intensely while they have them.

* * * *

I meant to speak of that which is not essential to the possession of wealth and position, *exclusiveness*. I believe it is difficult, almost impossible, for people to mix much with those poorer than themselves, if they desire to 'keep up an appearance.' I believe there are very few people in England who do not wish this more or less. I believe that, though this is a small thing in itself, it is eating out the heart of English life, till it is becoming a hollow mockery; because it involves the loss of sympathy it is accursed. When once love is awakened it has no power.

* * * *

Riches may be at times an evil, but poverty, when it is great, involves a continual calculation, binding the thoughts to earth in its lower forms—eating, drinking, buying, selling, etc., and making one wearying round; *this* may lead to wrong, but neither is so strong as God.

* * * *

I am nearly sure that books about people, whether in fiction or in true stories, are the only things of real use, for what is needed first for children or ignorant people, perhaps what we all need most, is to be able to enter into the hearts of others. If we see here love, truth, strength, we can realize a Father of love, truth, strength. I am sure there is no other way. Any other teaching is divided from earthly things, whereas people cannot reverence and love men without seeking something beyond them.

Therefore I believe that one must always work from the known and strong up to the unknown and weak. We must seize as most precious the vague memories of loved ones, the feelings that have bound us in families, and strive to strengthen them, and then work upwards.

* * * *

There is a quiet satisfaction in daily routine duty, at once soothing and interesting. This cannot be felt at times of intense feeling, that come at epochs in our lives, when our souls are stirred by higher hopes or joys, or heavy sorrows; these, from their intensity, force us to ask ourselves great questions about Who is really governing the world and our spirits. We could not support or resign our hopes, we should find some bitter disappointment in every joy, we could not bear our sorrows if we did not feel how near God is.

But in times of comparative quiet could we manage better without this consciousness? Would there not come a great craving for change, a heart hunger for something more beautiful than anything around us? Does not every little trial, in a time of calm, become as important as the small touches in Turner's work on its

masses of colour? Should we not fix our eyes on the dark spots, if a Father's presence did not teach us that we might and must look successfully for bright ones?

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We talk about the education of childhood as if childhood were the time of education, when, after all, it is manhood when the noble kind is possible. We mould children almost like clay, and like clay untried in the fire; another may come and mould them into vessels of dishonour, only there is a great Potter over all Who watches the making, and will try them in the fire. But he who is a beacon to man asks him for conscious obedience, and he guides himself like a well-steered ship through storms to the haven where he would be, lighted by that far-off light, not towards it always, often losing sight of it, but never forsaken by it, knowing that it is there, though the waves hide it—even if the waves be the waves of death, yet the light, having once burned, burns for ever, and its might shall last, because God has promised that He will 'bring all things to our remembrance.'

* * * *

Birthdays, like all anniversaries, are, I am sure, meant to bind the years together, as well as to teach us to see how much they differ. There are years of uncommon joy, years of particular grief, and yet they are both ended by a birthday, as if it were to teach us that both joy and grief speak to us on human grounds, touch us because we are living souls, God's children. If they touch us and

treat us as His, then are they indeed blessed! All thanks to them that they *do* teach us. We would not cease to have either of these messengers, even if we could. We *cannot*. Thank God for that, too.

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No one can see more clearly than I do how generous and devoted paid work may be, no one can feel more bitterly how continually it is apt to be something else. I think paid and unpaid work should go hand in hand, that we may test the regularity and conscientiousness of one, the generosity and devotion of the other.

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I don't know whether I am right, but I have a very solemn feeling about requests. I think one ought to hesitate before making them, hardly to hesitate a moment before granting them. I mean, of course, where they involve nothing wrong. So strong is my feeling about it that hardly anything pains me more than the memory that I have not fulfilled a request. . . .

When people have gone where we cannot help them any more, the thought of an unfulfilled request will sting us as nothing else will. . . .

The world is changing. The fever, in which your friend longs to hear your voice, passes; the difficulty in which she wants your love and sympathy vanishes or is surmounted; the grace is taken from an act of self-sacrifice by its becoming easy; no time is ours but the present. Dare we trifle with it? All times are God's. He can heal all broken hearts, convince all of His love. Dare we lose any opportunity of helping Him? I think

I am not wrong in believing it to be a duty to fulfil people's wants; granting their requests is one of the greatest and simplest ways of doing this.

* * * *

When long years have passed away there will be no mourning for suffering nobly borne. We shall see from a clear height how the life of love, and influence of character of one we love, depended on this suffering. All noble friends will prize the work and education of a friend more than her ease. There was sorrow among the disciples who stood near the cross; there was none when they preached Christ crucified. In the light of Christ's Passion we may rise above the storms of passionate despair to perfect faith, and partial sight of that blessedness which, prize we happiness never so warmly, we feel, if we be true friends, to be their fuller happiness, truer right, more shining glory than the lost ease.

* * * *

When we begin life, good and evil are such marked, clearly-divided things that gradations do not exist for us. We go out to war against evil; people, who choose it, are all massed together, we can hardly realize that they exist. Then we begin to see all the subtle temptations, to estimate a little what is resisted, to measure men, not only from the perfectly noble position which they might have taken, but sometimes also upwards, from the gulf into which they might have fallen. And somehow, as the dream of a mighty company of just men becomes to us a promise only, and we know that it is not realized here, yet we cling with a tenacity that will not be con-

quered, and a tenderness that cannot but be hopeful, to the faintest traces of goodness, to the gleams of what is noble, that shine out few and far between. Sometimes the thankfulness, that a man whom we have thought wrong has kept from the deepest wrong, is so intense as to bring tears to one's eyes.

* * * *

I believe that memories of childhood cling firmly, and start wonderfully into life in after-years, and that daily intercourse with a noble nature is a better education than any. Sometimes I feel as if all positive learning were as nothing compared with such an influence.

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I am glad that I saw the storm with you. Hitherto it has been a delight not associated with any friend. Now the fierce wild light will bring the recollection of that night. Storms will no longer be messengers of outward power and splendour, but of spiritual strength—strong because true, quietness amidst splendour, peace among awful sights.

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I often try, I think, to see too far in advance, for the sake of being prepared, but, after all, the only preparation is life with God.

* * * *

I believe, with you, that national life is but an extension of family life, that each nation, like each individual of a family, has an individual character, fitted for its spiritual

work in the world. I believe the love of country to be an instrument for calling men out of their selfishness for themselves and families, and filling them with generous thoughts. I believe its tendency is to make them respect different natures. For all these reasons I prize this national life and love it so much.

How real it is, too; how it is based on universal feelings; how our hearts warm to those who long ago have laboured and played with us, or to those who have trodden the same garden that we have loved, or seen those who have taught us, or were moved by the same song that moved us, or been influenced by a speech that has influenced us. Shall we not always feel a bond with those who have lived where we have lived, suffered from the same great national evils—cholera, famine, war; learned from the same authors, known the same climate, kneeled in the same churches?

Our lives are not long enough to give us time to realize the experiences of every nation, and it is necessary to understand in order to be able to sympathize. We have known English needs, and, sympathy being one strong ground of love, we love Englishmen.

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Oh, to live so as to be to everyone a living witness to the graciousness of those who trust in God! To give to those around us a sense of calm, as in the presence of a completed thing, perfect, though growing daily; to walk through life more strongly, because more rightly; to follow God's laws more simply, because less proudly; or to die and lose all pride of work in the folding

of hands that shall work no more, neither be weary; to lose all weakness in receiving 'the power of the Resurrection.'

* * * *

Yes, there is no such awful sadness as to feel without God in life; but to those whom He has given to know Him it is very much to be sure that He is near those who see Him least, preparing them, we trust, for the full sense of the blessing of knowing Him, by the awe of His absence. Stony and cold as the world is to them now, hope cannot even light the future, nor thankfulness the past, yet He who was and is, and is to come, the same eternal Father, is not less near them, though they cannot feel Him.

* * * *

We know this, sometimes they ask us to tell them this, always we may help them a little by telling them this, and by living in the consciousness of it, by keeping true to His spirit within us, by destroying evil everywhere, when we have the power; so that our evil deeds, and the presence of evil that we might have destroyed may never make them think that God is not. And so walking we shall look more steadfastly to that time when God will reveal Himself to each.

* * * *

We may all pray for the old Puritan conviction that sin is sin, and forever divided from God's light; but we must join to it a prayer for a larger, tenderer pity, and power of seeing traces of His light everywhere. That

grand, quiet, perfect ideal is a great help to us. Workers have to ask that no mists of earth shall ever cloud it, that in all things they may set it before themselves, and never be satisfied with less; that they may have strength to claim it for all men now—but in proportion as they love it, they will welcome every step towards it, and know that this only shows the abiding tendency.

We have to love perfection with patience that can leave times and seasons in the Father's hands.

* * * *

All times of trial raise us at once to the highest state of which our nature is capable, call out every latent nobleness; our souls rise and triumph, secure in the consciousness of God's union with them, so that while treasuring all earthly things more clearly than ever, we almost feel infinitely above them, living in the Kingdom of Heaven. Most of our failures come from our doubt of His spirit *Love*. Oh, let us not doubt, but be sure that we may work mighty wonders with it; that not for nothing was any single grain of it cast into our hearts.

We may not measure to the full the hope and consolation it brings to those who love us least, those who cross our path, and we never see again, those many dear ones, by whom the depth of our earnest love is unnoticed or unknown, those who have loved, rejoiced, sorrowed with us, and then passed, never to be seen again with our earthly eyes, but never to be forgotten, even when the death-sleep closes their eyes.

I remember single actions done many years ago, the memory of which never fails to fill my eyes with tears,

my heart with thankfulness. To think that any love of ours may strengthen some one's faith! To think it may give them hope, and self-respect enough to choose the right side in the battle of life! To nerve their hearts to labour for God! To think that the consciousness of it may come with soothing blessing to one dear to us, far away and suffering! *This* makes us pray that the God of Love will fill our hearts with tenderness, and nerve our spirits with faith, that through this life, as in the life to come, we may be bound ever more closely together.

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We are not left to choose whether we will be members of His family or not. We are placed as members of families to learn to understand His universal family. We are to learn from it how much each of us has a work which must be done, a character which must be developed to form at last that mighty body of many members, of which He is the Head. And then, if the members are taken by Him to do other work, we must think how all which is eternal and highest is spiritual.

* * * *

The old words of the Creed: 'I believe in the Holy Ghost,' what can they mean to us if we believe in the power of clever argument and cunning sophistry, and ungovernable passion and increasing degradation, and not in the still small voice beneath these? Why do we look for the resurrection and the life to come if He who said, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life,' has only power over worm and dust, and cannot raise from deeper death

those over whom the dust of sophistry and worm of gnawing sin have power?

* * * *

To us it is almost easy to watch those whom we love best during years of doubt. For as we believe that God has better things to come in the life beyond this for us whom He has blessed here, how much more sure are we that He Who sought the lost sheep, and rejoiced over the lost silver; Who knew that he loved most to whom most had been forgiven; Who knew that they which were whole needed not a physician, but they who were sick; Who seemed to yearn with peculiar love towards those whom He would have gathered beneath His wings and they would not—how much more are we sure that He has blessings for them, better than we can dream—they who in this world have suffered evil things, shall they not lie for ever in a better than Abraham's bosom?

* * * *

We need not fear, though the whirlwind and the fire reveal Him not, there remains the still small voice, which voice, speaking low and intermittently, we sometimes, forget and undervalue. But some wonderful mercy, some crushing sorrow, some sense of failure, or heroic deed may open men's eyes. Through years of shipwreck and violent denial and comfortable indifference that voice has been to many the one strong bond to all good, the one germ of faint hope, the one witness against evil, sowing in their hearts that grain of mustard seed that shall be a goodly tree in the Kingdom of Heaven.

* * * *

Death may indeed be an angel, in the old sense of the word, a messenger of God, of a Father Who loves the little ones, as tenderly even as the mother, whom he has taken to rest with Him, and from Whom all her love must have proceeded. Who knows, better than even she, what her children need. Who may mean many things by this deed, more and deeper things than we can guess; but love, entire love the ground of them all.

Darkly here we see that the loved one taken away out of our sight, far from jar, or pain, or chance of falling, holds ever, with those who remain, a holy place within their hearts, being to them a sacred memory against which they dare not sin by light or wrong deeds.

Then in the knowledge that anything so gracious must ever live with God, and could never fail in love to them, may there not come deep knowledge of the reality of that vast spirit world, which the great dead have entered?—all who have loved truly entering there into the joy of their Lord; and living more vividly to these children because among the great spirits there is a mother, whom they cannot lose—so clearly may the voices of the other world speak to them urging noble act and high hope.

And then not least among the blessings of that change, motherlessness may bring the added sympathy for those who suffer here, a deeper tenderness, which may make a greater resemblance to Him Who cares to know all human suffering, and did know it all, and does know it all.

And lastly, the great heart-hunger, may it not lead them to Him Who alone can finally satisfy it? All partial satisfaction taken away till He, Who gives them all their

glory, having led His children to know Who loves them, and how *much*, will lead them once more to her, to whom He placed them in the deepest of all relationships, and at last to their ears, on which the dear sounds have rung faintly below the tumult of years, though heard so far back in childhood, shall break again the accents of a mother's voice, after that of God has called them to rest from their labours, and the vision that faded away, or remained like a strange dream, through a tossing life, a vision of a face of love will dawn upon them, glorified by even deeper love; and the purpose of the Father, Who broke the earthly tie that He might link the spiritual one more firmly, will become ever more clear—after the old words of blessing are spoken that call the spirit, that laboured here, to clearer light and better life, and the perfect rest of most complete knowledge of an infinite love.

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We cannot attain to happiness so long as we seek it, we cannot avoid seeking whatever we believe to be the greatest blessing. We must choose right simply because it is right, and cling to it through bitter sorrow, and if at last it is crowned with joy, *that* is God's affair, not ours, except as a cause of thankfulness.

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One would not willingly be with the people who intensify money panics. I hope I should wait in quiet confidence, though it resulted in loss, rather than be carried away in wild, suspicious hurry, like the crowds who haste to be rich at any risk, and then rush to preserve their money. There is no doubt a medium course, which

experience alone can teach, the confidence founded on knowledge and rooted in temperance.

God knows it becomes difficult in England. He has made us members of one another, and so we suffer for one another's sins, and for the great sin of money worship. What one would desire for those one loves would be as much knowledge as can be obtained by quiet, regular, orderly management of affairs, the habitual obedience to the right rules of life, and then, such entire trust in God that all outward things may be felt to be in His keeping, so that we may be content in whatever state we are, and walk calmly above all loss.

* * * *

I count her truly blest and greatly honoured, who may and can suffer with those she loves. It is to see sorrow and not share it that makes one say in the bitterness of soul, 'Why am I alone?' And then, as more sorrow comes on oneself, and humbles one, one feels, 'I was not worthy to share the suffering. I was trusting in my own love, my own power of consolation; surely our Father has been with them.' And then we find that our sorrow has been different and apart, but it has led us still to the ground of our union with the loved ones. We are sure, from our own experience, that a Father has been with us in the darkest moments. He has been with them, too, and in the one Strength, the one root of Peace, we feel our union is greatest, our love deepest.

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I cannot well express how sure I am of the unutterable dullness of abstract truths, however gloriously expressed

in any way, but one very living. However simple the words, words have not taken root in many hearts, and if you want to make people feel what is meant by love you must not say 'love,' nor 'tender,' nor 'gentle,' nor 'sympathetic,' but 'mother,' and you will then call up these feelings, and many more, gathering them up, so that they have life.

* * * *

I have taken in a principle from half a sentence read or heard accidentally, and, though many years have been wanted to perfect the conquering of old habits, and conform life to the idea, the *idea* itself has been stamped once for ever, and the will set, from that moment to realize it, and no multitude of words or strictness of rule could do more than the memory of the old sentence, or sight. The absence of this sensitiveness is to me a puzzle. I fear we injure it by words, and yet leave words unsaid which might impress the truth. Anyhow it is often clear that the idea has not been grasped nor the will set.

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I have a strong sense of the terribleness of shutting men out, when they have made a false step, of the absence of any open-hearted willingness to believe in and receive those who would gladly be in a healthier atmosphere, of my strong sense that she was changing, doubting, hungering, and of the impossibility of turning away from just sufficient acquaintance with her for her to know where to turn, if ever we could do her any good. Still, I was prepared to leave her in God's hands.

* * * *

If I have one hope greater than all others, overshadowing all acts and thoughts and words, it is the hope that I may share with others some of the joy I have in knowing what God is, that this dear life has been precious to me much for the sake of the possibility it gives of living as if God were near; and when a hungering soul is near me, if I were to turn away and hug respectability and my own bright life, I should be giving up the very purpose for which I had cared for them all.

All that God means me to do He will strengthen me for. Our friends may think that we act wrongly, but the old power of sight is forever there; and the poor world judges more justly than we often think. Anyhow, now, thank God, I see my way very clearly, and I could not, in the memory of the bitter pain of man's exclusiveness, in the deeper and more abiding sense of what has been shown to me, leave the barest chance unheeded of carrying back to His fold any wandering sheep. I don't believe in preaching, but I do in a presence, and God being my helper, I will not turn from Him when He speaks to me.

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I have thought how much the power of enjoying one thing depends on the development and use of all our nature, so that it is not only necessary to make our own joy in any way our great aim, but that head, heart, spirit, body be rightly brought into play.

Look at the sensitive, elegant artist, who thinks he feels everything so strongly; he feels *keenly*, and his feelings overpower his weak body and mind; there is

no depth in them. But let such a man set himself to think hard things, to study facts, mathematics, to learn patience and quiet, he will find his impressions at once nobler and more abiding.

Though a man must have his own work to which all others conduce and give way, still, if he will do that work nobly, if he will really love it for long years, he must be a complete man, not a half one. So undeveloped are we, for the most part, that the hand-workers have no sense of the beautiful, the thinkers no hearts, the affectionate no sense, and yet we expect to be happy.

If you restrain enjoyment solely for the sake of increasing it, you will fail by an eternal law that the contemplation of our own feelings, or raising them into an aim for which to strive, destroys unconsciousness, and takes from them their delight.

I believe that the complete development of our nature can only be accomplished by the sense of some people wanting each part, or by our wanting it ourselves. It is not to be worked out as a problem, but must grow, root, stalk, bud, flower, and fruit, as it is wanted; and when one's love, or joy in beauty, or power of distinct thought first springs into life fully, it is like the complete answer to our greatest prayer; for, as each person should be a whole, part answering to part, so should a family, a circle of friends, a nation, a world be, one developing the other.

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It is more often too little love than too much thought that makes people weary of study, want of plenty of memories to feed on that makes them dislike walking; none but a whole man can enjoy anything.

* * * *

Make me to-day, make me every day, a small sun of Thine, with Thy light of Love; so as the years roll on, I shall surely understand how He loves; how He will take care of all I love.

* * * *

All this will blow over and leave right and truth and all things clear, and the sense of pain will die away, and leave all peaceful. I think one is meant to use all blessings that come to one, not to reject them, but to make them one's own, in the sense of their being part of one's life, even after they are gone. The memory that all things must pass away, which belongs, in part, to everything here, is one we must not lose, but then, beneath every visible thing that passes is the spiritual one, which never should pass; and while we cling to this, we need not fear a deeper sense of loss than is good for one.

* * * *

What a man might have and what he has are very different things. What good are his best friends, he gets so little of their best? His own fault—of course it is; but which of us would be greatly to be pitied except for the results of our own faults? And the nature fullest of faults is often the loftiest in possibilities, and more passionately to be loved and admired than the more

even one. Only in this, as in all else, the final question is one of *direction*. If the man is going up from great to greater, or from low to higher, one rightly loves him, and honours him, but if he goes backwards one can only pity him.

* * * *

As one may walk in shadow, and carry the sunlight with one, so one may walk amidst impurity, and carry purity with one—so may one walk on earth, and yet have Heaven within one. Things are and we see them, and yet we see them not, our eyes being so full of sunlight that the forms of earthly objects cast no shadows; so surely must spirits walk and so, in a measure, may we walk, because we are spirits.

* * * *

Christmas will soon be here with its wondrous messages and precious memories, and deep whispers about the realities of relationship. How all jars seem to sink to nothingness at its approach! How the real bond of family reasserts itself, dominant over fancy, attraction, yes, perhaps, in a measure over friendship itself, as though it would teach us how tremendous the bond of duty is! Certainly we have duties to our friends, too, but they seem to have more relation to what we feel instinctive longing to do, innate capacity for doing, to stand more by virtue of relations which we have chosen for ourselves than solely on the command of God. I suppose it must be because He is our Father, because we know that He knows us entirely, and estimates and sends only what is wholly good, that there is such infinite peace about the

fulfilment of these family duties, as if we were walking on such firm ground; the friendship duties take their own place, and bring their own full deep blessings, too.

* * * *

I must sink the thought of my work in that of His to Whom all the ends of the earth are equally deaf. Labour here may be enjoined, but not necessarily success. It may be reserved for us to achieve it through weaker instruments. It may not be meant for us at all. But it is quite sure that patience and hope are meant for us, and zealous striving and thankfulness for all our many blessings. And beyond the small sphere of our labour all God's world lies, and the harvests are appointed by Him.

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